A GOLDEN HEART.

A Novel.

BY

TOM HOOD.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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To the Memory of

MY DEAR DEAD FRIEND,

PAUL GRAY,

I INSCRIBE THIS BOOK.

T. HOOD.

PREFACE.

In submitting these pages to the public I am desirous of saying a few words to anticipate a possible objection to the manner in which the hero of my story is described as discovering his gun.

I felt it would have been absurd in me to introduce any pseudo-scientific theories, or to pretend to explain the principles of the invention. But I felt I should not be very wrong in making the story of the discovery an instance of the mysterious way in which Nature has anticipated the researches of Science. In her vast storehouse the principal of the Archimedean screw was at work long ere we groped our way to it. The bone of the first bird contained the secret of our tubular bridges: the strength of material in a hollow circular

form. The power of the pulley was anticipated b the trochlearis muscle of the eye; three forms of th lever are concealed in the anatomy of the hum frame. I do not think that James Trefusis's sec "hidden in a flower," is too wild an invention wl are considered.

I may add, that the novel first appeared a provincial paper, under a title which has be abandoned partly because it did not suit t story, and partly because I found that a no with a similar title had already appeared.

T. H.

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CHAPTER I.

MY HERO IN A WHEELBARROW—AND IN LOVE.

POLVREHAN stood at the loveliest point in the lovely valley of the Rella, a beautiful stream that hurries along, now flashing white and silver over broad slabs and boulders, now seemingly sleeping in dark deep pools, while on either side rise the hills, their sides clothed with fir plantation and oak coppice, climbing at times with abrupt steepness from the water's edge, but now and then falling back to leave little amphitheatres of luxuriant greensward, or beds of osier and sallows. The house was situated in the elbow of a sharp angle made by the stream, so that it looked along two lovely valleys. A natural platform on the

hill-side gave ample space for the buil
and for a tolerably large bit of garden
fully enlarged by terraces cut in front t
very verge of a sheer descent to the rive

At the back of the house the road s
round the side of the hill, to a little hc
in which nestled the village of Merrin
snugly sheltered from the winds that c
sweeping across the wide moors, w
stretched away behind and above it to
North Coast, against whose precipitous r
walls the long rollers of the vast Atl
dashed ceaselessly in vain.

Polvrehan was a snug little estate,
a delicious old house, long-roofed,
ceilinged, with quaint gables, and m
thatch, with great black beams and b
wainscoting, with carved chimneys
massive balustrades. It had been in
possession of the Carlyons from time
memorial, for although not a distingui
family theirs was an old one.

The remote and almost insular positi
Cornwall had—until late years when
railway, that great civiliser, but also
destroyer of romance, took possession of
preserved many institutions that have
where perished. One relic of old feud

it retained in a class of "squireens," who by virtue of being "The Somethings of Tre, Pol, or Pen Something," held a right divine to do nothing but idle, and tope, and run into debt and dissipation. They had just enough money to live upon at ease, and no more education, as a rule, than the farmers with whom they associated with a semi-condescension.

The Carlyon estates were extensive estates for a family of the "squireen" class, but the acres that sounded so well in a description of the property, consisted for the most part of moorland, which produced little besides snipes, curlews, granite posts for the gates, and scanty feed for a few cows and "the squire's" hunter. For though there was not much hunting to be had, "the squire" was always addicted to the sport, and would ride miles to a meet, with a pasty and brandy flask in his pocket.

The history of the Carlyons repeats itself. The eldest son was always brought up as "the young squire," was petted, and courted, and grew up on the model of his father. The younger sons were sent into the world early to shift for themselves, and sometimes so far overcame the disadvantages of their birth and breeding as to turn out

hard-working and respectable men. The young squire, meanwhile, coming to man's estate—and his father's property—would generally marry, and, as a rule, marry some buxom damsel of a neighbouring farmer—a wholesome robust country girl, who, though she assumed the airs of "squire's lady," could no more conceal thereby her real extraction than she could poison the healthy blood she infused into the family. But no long succession of Blowsalinda mothers could avert from the race the ultimate curse entailed on it by idleness, drunkenness, and dissipation.

At the time when my story begins the last Clayton of the elder branch died a childless, bachelor, old man, at barely eight-and-twenty.

Clayton Clayton, the next heir, thus came into the property somewhat unexpectedly, as there had been several claimants between him and himself, but they had dropped off successively, so little were their chances of ultimate succession.

Clayton had been educated for an engineer, and had taught, or was taught rather by [illegible] application, shown considerable promise and made fair to rise

high in his profession—when, suddenly, what his friends called "his good luck" befell him, and he was called on to relinquish industry and betake himself to idleness. The Carlyon blood was strong in him, and he was by no means averse to ease and indolence, and therefore took very kindly at first to the life of a squire.

But George Carlyon was town-bred, and he had none of the resources which the country-born idler could have found to drive off the blue devils. He didn't hunt, or shoot, or fish, and he knew nothing of the management of a farm.

He tried marriage, but with no great success. The wife he selected was too noble a woman for him. Why she married him is not easy to say. But then the wisest and best women commit one folly in their lives, and, as a rule, that folly is their marriage; so that Mrs. Carlyon was no exception to the general rule. When her children were born—two girls—she devoted her whole life to them, and found in their society some recompense for the misery she suffered with her husband. What that misery was I am about to tell you.

Finding that his marriage rather decreased

county. Every new mine that was opened was supplied by Carlyon and Co. with engines; and when a fresh shaft was sunk in any of the old mines, it was Carlyon and Co. that set up the additional engine. Now it is the custom in Cornwall, whenever an engine is set to work for the first time, to call together shareholders and all concerned, besides a great many who are not concerned, and give a feast of some sort, with champagne flowing at the high table, and plenteous spirits and water at the lower boards. As a matter of course, the Engineer is one of the invited, and a place among the guests most honoured was always reserved for "Muster Carlyon," around whom the generous, hospitable Cornishmen rallied in force, for, as they said, "he be one of we, though he were addicated to Lunnon." There was a mighty clanship always among these Western folk.

As the foundry grew to be firmly established, and as George's stock of energy began to run low, he ceased to take any great immediate interest in the management, going over to the foundry at intervals, and inspecting it very cursorily. But he never missed any of the festivities that were con-

[illegible] with it. No [illegible] was ever so to work that [illegible] did not see the first stroke of, and at the hour which followed he was ever one of the [illegible], as well as the [illegible] [illegible].

The old [illegible] hand was beginning to work. As he [illegible] to take away from these meetings [illegible] over the [illegible], the country folk would look after him and say he was "one of the old sort" — [illegible], and he [illegible] — and [illegible] a sort of rough pride in him. In which, he [illegible] back to the foundry work some of his neighbours began to look on him as a [illegible] man, and shake their heads saying he was the last [illegible] of Polcrebar who had gone [illegible] business. Poor Mrs [illegible] saw her husband growing day by day more [illegible] a prey to evil habits—sinking lower and lower to the level of his associates. For she had never held sufficient influence over him to be able to exert it now with any effect. Her interference only caused a [illegible] estrangement, and made the home more desolate. She therefore gave up the task as a hopeless one, and devoted all her energies to keeping her children in ignorance of their father's fall. She did not live long to do [illegible].

I am, however, somewhat anticipating. My story really begins about three years after George's marriage, when the foundry had not been long established, and just after the birth of his second child.

George Carlyon was leaning on the gate of Polvrehan, smoking a cigar in the cool of the evening, when Peter Roskilly, an old man who acted as a sort of bailiff for George, passed by with his barrow.

"What's the bundle you've got in your barrow, Roskilly?"

"'Tis a chiel, sir, as I've 'dopted—my sister's chiel, sir, what's left a widder."

"What sex, Peter?"

"Well, the father of 'un was dissentin', I reckon, but——"

"That's a curious sex, anyhow! I mean is it a boy or a girl?"

"Oh, be sure, sir—ax yer pardon! 'Tis a boy; and a main fine lad ur is too for's age."

"How old is he then?"

"Well, about of a three, I reckon, sir. Ur was born the same year as you broft yer good lady home, for I mind I was up here to work when my missus come and says as Polly had gotten a baby."

"But you've children of your own, Pet

"Ees, sure, sir. Both of 'em 'arnin', 1
so we can spare a bit an' sup for the p
thing. I reckon I'm like the old hen,
I'm bound to scrat all day long, whether
for one chick or a dozen."

"Well, Peter, you're a brave chap, and
soon as the lad can run of errands or
anything of that kind I'll give him r
down to foundry."

"Thank'ee sir, I'll make bold to rei
yer honour of that when the lad's f
for work."

"So do, Peter."

"I will, sir. Good night to 'ee!"

"Good night, Peter."

This promise of Mr. Carlyon's was
forgotten, either by Peter Roskilly or
wife, and they dinned it into the lad's e
from morning until night. No wonc
therefore, that as soon as he was trustec
run about by himself he spent most of
time at the foundry, where the men trea
him kindly, and where he picked up a ta
for mechanics and some insight into the w
for which he was destined. He was a sl
shrewd lad, with a grave thoughtful fac
and the workmen, to whom of course

She used to lend him books and papers, and gave him excellent advice about his reading and studies—for James Trefusis found out very early that he should not get on as he wished to do without education—and having established that fact, at once set sturdily to work to make up for lost time. Self-education, however, is no easy task, and the best intentions and desires may only lead to waste of time without some kindly directing, such as Mrs. Carlyon was able to give him.

Peter Roskilly, the kind uncle who had been a father to James, was an infirm old man now, and it was the lad's turn to support him. He did so without a murmur, though Peter had two sons of his own, who would not raise a finger to help the poor old fellow. Peter had served George Carlyon long and faithfully, and he should have done something to guard his old servant against want in his declining days; but though he spoke of Peter with maudlin affection, and pressed drink upon him on every occasion, George never pensioned him, and so James had to support him out of his own wages, which were fair enough for a young single man, but not too much for him and Peter.

But James never murmured, and bore the

children. The two girls found a firm ally and sympathising friend in James.

When they grew older, and the crockery, and the [illegible], and all other toys were laid aside for the maidenly pursuits which their mother encouraged them to adopt, they still had recourse to James for aid. Did Marian want some embroidery cotton, or Alice wish to have some Berlin wool matched—off they went to James and begged him to do the little commission for them the next time he had occasion to go to the market town, about five miles off. And James always obligingly found that he had most urgent occasion to go there the very next day, and brought the required articles to [illegible] in the evening.

"Oh, James, how kind of you," would be the acknowledgment. "But you are sure you didn't go on purpose?"

"Oh, no, Miss Marian," or "Miss Alice," the answer would be. "I had to go there for the [illegible]," or "[illegible] some tools I required," or some other business to [illegible] the same.

[illegible]

Who knows? Suppose, in order to find out, we follow James, as he is returning along the banks of the Rella from some errand of this description. He saunters easily along, for the evening is closing in, and it is pleasant to stroll by the brookside when the rosy sunset streams down the valley, dashing the oaks and firs with crimson, and sprinkling rubies into every water-break and rapid of the Rella.

It is a very still evening, and as he sits down, by-and-by, on a gate, there is hardly a sound to break the silence. He is so deep in a reverie that he is motionless as a statue — so motionless that by-and-by a shining brown otter creeps out of the water a few yards from his feet, and glides away sinuously among the ferns and undergrowth, with a big silvery trout in its cruel snakelike jaws; so motionless that that living jewel, the king-fisher, comes presently to his accustomed fishing-perch, and poises there— as motionless as James — over his own radiant reflection in the stream; so motionless that the swifts come darting to and fro within easy reach, and make lanes through the mist of gnats that pipe and dance perpetually round him.

The hum of insect life, the occasional sharp quick note of one of the birds, and the faint purring of a distant fall, are the only sounds. The leaves barely whisper as they move to the breathing of the soft wind that comes at sunset through the woods and sings lullaby to the flowers: for the daisies are closed now, and the buttercups, and the delicate pink almond scented bindweed has furled its fairy trumpets and gone to sleep for the night. Overhead the sky has deepened to a violet, in which one star is twinkling into sight. A belated rook glides over the valley, and far away, showing against the last faint gold of sunset, a hawk quivers on outspread pinions over its unconscious quarry.

The light dies down in heaven, and more stars peep out. Near by, about, and far off up the valley there is the low cry of an owl. Here and there in the bushes the pure pale blue lamp of the glow-worm gleams out. The fireflies have disappeared from the stream now, but wherever a star hangs in the sky above it there seems a slender thread of [illegible] And in the distance [illegible] from the Bells,

and stole away like a ghost among the darkling stems of the fir trees.

But while all these lovely phenomena of nature's working were passing in front of him, James Trefusis sat as still as a statue, and quite as blind to what was going on before him.

His eyes, to tell the truth, were fixed upon the far-off future. He was dreaming a day-dream. Shall we summon that vision from the ivory gate?

He was picturing himself as a wealthy man. A short time since he had perfected an invention which he believed was to make his fortune. It was a new loom, and a very ingenious piece of mechanism too. James had not contented himself with merely studying the steam-engine. He had extended his labours to every branch of mechanics, and as far as his opportunities allowed him had read up every kind of manufacture. This new loom, he dreamed, had only to be seen to be adopted immediately—it was so simple and so certain in its working. And then would come prosperity—and position!

What had come to this young man, so contented hitherto to live humbly, and share

name is written. It is a very foolish action, is it not? But then, my dear reader, if you have ever been in love—and if you haven't I decline to have anything to say to you—you have done things quite as foolish twenty times in your life, or else you do not really know the pleasant pains of this tender passion.

I don't think we can any of us come into court with a very good grace to laugh at poor James Trefusis, as he reverently lifts the little packet to his lips. At rare intervals only is it his good fortune to touch her hand; and what exquisite happiness that is to him. He only dares to make love to her by proxy. He worships the flowers she tends—the inanimate objects she touches—the ground she treads. And with all this love in his heart, which is for ever struggling with him as if it were a demon in possession, which is ever urging him to fling himself at her feet and declare himself, he has, poor Spartan, to wrap himself in a cloak of cold and distant respect.

No wonder that here, under the darkling sky, in the dusky woods, with no witnesses but the stars and the stream, which seems to have a tone of pity for him in its voice, he

diamonds, and every leaf and twig was hung with sparkling drops. Rella, swollen by numerous threadlike tributaries, that sprang into being at every shower, was bubbling and whirling with extra vigour, its clear stream clouded by the turbulent freshets, to the huge satisfaction of its multitudinous trout, which were all on the feed. Sheep were bleating, and cows were lowing on the fat, plushy meadows beside the Rella, sheltered by the wooded hills that embosomed them. Alice, after wandering over a number of old airs, at last struck on one belonging to a simple old ballad she had learnt from her mother. Presently she began to sing it in a low sweet voice.

There was a weaver's daughter once
In Stratford town did dwell,
And she was so surpassing sweet
That all folks loved her well.

And though she worked in silks so gay,
Yet homespun was her wear;
But satin clad might envy her
Because she was so fair.

No [illegible] shoon upon her feet
As through the streets she paced;
And her yellow hair, like golden rings,
Fell down [illegible] her waist.

The King his son rode through the street
  Where this fair maiden dwelt:
At sight of her the heart did leap
  Beneath his jewelled belt.

"Come down! come down, thou lovely maid,
  Come down and be my bride;
For I have seen no face so fair
  In all this country-side."

"Oh, if I come down, thou noble youth,
  Wilt thou by Mary swear
That thou wilt not ungentle prove,
  And leave me to despair?"

In Stratford Town, that very day,
  The wedding it was seen;
And ne'er was known in any land
  So good and fair a queen."

The air was one of those plaintive airs, like "Barbara Allen," for instance, which are so satisfying to the sense that when they are finished we do not want to hear anything else. Any other tune would jar on the sensibility they had excited. Alice felt this influence—closed the piano, and walked to the window.

The effect of the most exquisite music is to create a feeling of melancholy. Is it because we hear the music mounting up and dying away so far above us, and know that the longing to rise on its wings is so hopeless a

king should have to do riding through Stratford town."

"Well, I don't know—there are so many Stratfords—and this might be one somewhere on the sea coast."

"I'm afraid, Alice, there is no Stratford on the sea coast."

"What a tease you are, Marian. Why don't you let me have my poor queen and noble king? They never harmed you!"

"My child, you have such implicit faith in all that you read in your romances and fairy legends that it is necessary to bring them sometimes to the test of truth, even though it destroys some pretty allusions."

"But don't you think it possible that a king's son could love a poor girl? Why, now I think of it, there is king Cophetua. I suppose he is an historical personage?"

"I'm not so sure of that, Alice."

"But even supposing he is not, don't you think that a real king might love a beggar maid?"

"A real king! Ah, but all real kings are not crowned, Alice. And some real kings go about in beggar's rags."

"Why there, I protest, you have been reading some of my romances on the sly."

"I don't understand you."

"I mean, dear—to take the instance of that dear old ballad of mamma's—that at times the queen must have been haunted with a doubt whether her husband's fair name had not suffered for his stooping to lift her to the throne at his side."

"But what matter if he really loved her? He would know that he stooped for a jewel worthy of the crown, and that his fair name could not fairly suffer."

"And do you think he had no doubts—no suspicions?" asked Marian. She had become interested in this argument, and she rose from her chair and walked up and down under the verandah.

"What doubts and suspicions, dear?" asked Alice, coming to her sister's side. They wound their arms round each other, and began to pace to and fro side by side, passing beyond the verandah and extending their walk along the path which ran in front of the house.

"I fancy him at times suffering terribly as he looked at his beautiful queen, and wondering if all that perfection was really his. He must have asked his heart at times whether it were not possible that what was given him

for love was nothing more than gratitude."

"Poor king! I think he is more to be pitied than the queen; don't you, Marian?"

"Women, I believe, suffer more intensely in this way than men."

There was a brief pause again, and the sisters took two or three turns up and down the garden. Marian was thinking of her mother's sufferings, with which she was better acquainted than her younger sister.

"I wonder, Marian," said Alice at last, "why they never reverse the old story."

"How do you mean, child?"

"Why, make the queen marry a weaver, or the princess fall in love with a beggar. I never remember anything of the sort."

"It would not tell well, would it? There is something in the idea that is humiliating to the man whom you want to make your hero."

"Yes; I suppose that must be it. It did not seem quite right, and yet I could not explain it."

"To come down from your beloved land of Romance to plain matter of fact—one doesn't think much harm of a woman who marries a rich man, even if he is a little older than she is—women are so dependent,

But how dreadful it is to hear of a man marrying for money!"

"It's very common though, isn't it, Marian?"

"I fear it is. What can a woman think of the man who marries her for such a mercenary reason?"

"The wretch!"

This was all very natural talk for two girls secluded from the world very much; but it was a conversation that had considerable influence on their future. How often do seeming trifles swell into importance in this life? Don't you remember the whole string of awful circumstances in the "Arabian Nights"—all of which arose simply from the throwing away of a date stone, whereby the son of a powerful Jinn lost the use of his eye?

"I remember poor mamma used to say," said Marian, as they took another turn up the path, "that it was quite bad enough when a woman could not love her husband, but that it was a shocking thing indeed when she could not respect him even. Could she respect a man who had married her for money?"

"Oh, dear no—I should think not!"

"No, Alice dear, depend upon it, though a woman is often obliged to owe position to her husband, the reverse is inadmissible. A man, if he really loves a woman, can never consent to owe his position to her."

As Marian uttered these words they reached the end of the walk, which led up to a door in the wall, opening into the plantation.

Marian's eyes had been bent on the ground, and she had not noticed that the door was open now, and that James Trefusis was standing there.

James had been away in London for several weeks. Mr. Carlyon had seen the model of his loom, and was so pleased with it that he had advanced him enough money to take him to town, in order that he might submit his design to some practised engineer, and see what he could make of it. What the result of that visit was we shall learn shortly.

Alice was the first to see him.

"What! back so soon, James? I thought we should not see you yet. Papa said you would be gone a long time. You've been terribly missed. My Brigand has been at a complete standstill for want of the blue

grounding for the sky and—but how ill you look!"

"London don't suit me, Miss Alice," and he added, almost fiercely, "nor I it! Is the master in, do you know, miss?"

This last question was addressed to Marian. She only bowed her head. James Trefusis passed on towards the house. The two girls went in-doors at once. It seemed as if a sudden gloom had fallen on the day.

Marian felt sure that James had heard what she said. What matter? you ask. I answer — Much! Although she knew nothing of his love, she was conscious to herself of a desire to stand high in his opinion, and she had allowed him to overhear words of hers, which, without any knowledge of the conversation which led to them, he could not but think dictated by pride and exclusiveness. I can hardly explain exactly what she felt and feared. She could see only too clearly that he was pained at what she had said. Perhaps, without knowing his love, she, who admired him almost unconsciously, felt she had closed the door against herself.

There was nothing strange in the admiration of such a girl as Marian, for a man like

James Trefusis. Compared with the fuddling squireens and uneducated young farmers, who were the only men she had to compare him with, his character "stuck fiery off indeed." And in her presence he had always this further advantage, that, like all true sons of giants, he was gentle before the woman he loved, and was a child, with all his strength, while she was near.

James Trefusis found Mr. Carlyon sitting in his own sanctum, discussing a bottle of sherry with the doctor. George Carlyon's health was giving way a little now, and the doctor, an ignorant country practitioner, frequently dropped in to see him, and never refused a glass of wine. Nevertheless, the doctor was not so ignorant that he did not know how Carlyon was injuring himself by this very same habit of drinking with every one who came to see him. Dr. Johns had practised among the squireens and miners long enough to know the effects of such habits.

A very different man was George Carlyon now from the man who saw little James Trefusis first in old Peter Roskilly's barrow. His eyes were bloodshot, his skin yellow and dull, and he had a tremulous under lip, and a hand that made the bottle tinkle

against the glass as he poured out the wine.

But he was as merry, and kindly, and hearty as ever. When James came in he shook him by the hand warmly, told him "to sit down—he hadn't expected him back yet, but he was right glad to see him again. What had he done in London?"

"Nothing," said James shortly, sinking into a chair.

"Nothing! How's that? Didn't Briant help you! or were you idling away your time? Lads will be lads in London."

"Nay! I never idled my time, and no one could be kinder than Mr. Briant. I showed him the model, and he looked at it, and said it was clever, and asked me what looms I'd seen. I told him none. Where had I learnt about them? So I told him out of books, and mentioned the books. And then he shook his head, and said, "My good fellow, you've been wasting time sadly. Those books are all old and gone by. Your invention is not a new one. It was found out eight years ago by—by—there I forget the name he told me; but he said 'twas in use everywhere, and I was a day behind the fair."

"By Jove, how provoking!" said George Carlyon, "and what did you do then?"

"Why, I up fist and smashed the model, and came right away here."

"And a good thing too, Trefusis," broke in the doctor, "for, I'm sorry to say, your uncle's very bad, and not likely to last long. I'm glad you're back, for he's been asking for you over and over again."

"Ills don't come singly, it seems," said James, with a bitterness that the others, who were ignorant of the scene in the garden just now, were at a loss to account for.

"You mustn't take this failure so to heart, James," said Carlyon. "You must set to work to invent something that hasn't been done before. Is it about the advance you're troubled? Nay, I'd be ashamed to reckon that, for I ought to have known enough of my old trade to have saved you that expense. We're quits there, my lad; we're quits there."

"Thank you, sir, heartily. I'll hope to pay you back, though, some day; for if Uncle Peter dies I'll be off to London for good, and try to make sure I'm not going over old ground. I'll keep up with the times then, and maybe do something to be proud of. I'll try, at any rate."

This resolve surprised George Carlyon. Perhaps it surprised James himself almost as much. It was, in truth, formed almost at the moment he spoke it, and never would have been conceived but for that unfortunate passage in the garden a few minutes before. Those words of Marian's had wounded the poor fellow deeply, and as he blundered away with the dart still rankling in his heart, the first instinct was the instinct of the wounded beast, to get out of sight and hearing, and lie down. In the short time he had spent in London, James had learnt there was no solitude like the solitude of a stranger in a great city, and he longed to bury himself in the busy crowds that would not notice his scars or heed his agony.

He went home and shut himself up. His uncle's dangerous state was sufficient excuse for his doing so. And in this manner, for two days he brooded over his bitter disappointment, watching by the sick bed, and tending with that almost womanly care, of which a strong man is capable, the last moments of one who had been a second father to him.

On the third day, when the evening closed in, James drew the sheet up over Peter

Roskilly's face, and then he was alone in the cottage. At the end of the week they buried the old man, and on the night of the funeral James took leave of his friends and set out for London.

It was midnight when he set out to walk across the moors to the north road, where he could catch the morning mail. He determined to go up the valley of the Rella—for reasons into which we need hardly inquire.

Standing in the valley under Polvrehan, he saw the moonbeams gleaming on the panes of a little white-curtained window, and he knew that the woman he loved was asleep there.

"Good night. Good-bye. God guard you!" he murmured, as he set out along the banks of the Rella, but ever and anon, as he threaded the windings of the valley, he looked back and saw the moonlight sleeping on the walls of Polvrehan, and again and again he called on Heaven to bless her for whom his life had become dark!

"I'm all curiosity to see him!" said Alice.

"Does he know anything about engines, papa?" enquired Marian.

"Humph! I can hardly say—but he's a sort of universal genius, and a very enterprising and shrewd fellow. You see, I want some one who will take the active management now. James Trefusis was a great help to me, and now he's gone, I'm obliged to go to the foundry oftener than I can afford time."

It is not easy to say how George Carlyon's time was so much occupied that he could not attend to his business. The real truth was, he was inventing excuses. Cormack had taken his fancy greatly at the dinner where he met him, and, seeing the impression he created, had not failed to use every effort to establish himself in Mr. Carlyon's favour.

Henry Cormack was a man excellently calculated to get on in the world. His was one of those cold hard natures which inevitably succeed simply because they can hold on their course unswayed by pity or liking.

He was a finely-built man, but rather slim, and he had the white face, the pale

reddish hair, the keen grey eye, and aquiline nose which were so many signs of his temperament and disposition. He wore a moustache, on the strength of his Spanish service, and that moustache served to hide a mouth which was coarse and wide and ogreish.

He was excellent company—though he never smiled. He could laugh when it was necessary, crack jokes, rather bitter ones at times—and be a very jolly companion indeed. But a close observer would have seen that the moment the laugh died out his face instantly became sternly stolid—that the jest was spoken with a tone of contempt—and that the jolly companionship was only the clever assumption of a part. He could drink deep, but was never affected by what he took, which indicates, I fancy, that he was not really rollicking, but merely soaking. There was no excitement of the spirits to reinforce the excitement of the stimulant. It is bad enough when a man drinks deep and gets drunk; but it is worse when he drinks deep and does not get drunk. The former injures himself—the latter is dangerous to others.

When Henry Cormack was a young man

he had obtained an appointment as clerk to a mine in Portugal. How he got it I do not know, for he was one of those men who do not seem to have fathers and mothers—probably because they cut themselves adrift early from such relations as are likely to become burdens at some future period. For some time he went on capitally, winning golden opinions, but at last suspicion of questionable practices on his part was aroused. There was no exposure, but Cormack withdrew—with a hole in his reputation, and a lesson which he never forgot—a lesson on the necessity of caution, and a profound respect for the maxim, "Don't be found out."

Cast adrift from the mine, he was glad to enter the Carlist ranks, in which he served with credit, for he had nerve and personal courage, which, however—thanks to his calculating coolness—never running him into needless danger, was never overtaxed.

On his return to England, he lived the usual hand-to-mouth shiftless life of a London adventurer; but naturally gravitating towards mines, eventually got employment on a Cornish speculation, got up by Londoners, and having once inserted his

foot into the business in this way, soon contrived to make room for his body. At the time when George Carlyon made his acquaintance, he was in full feather, having effected some lucky investments in shares that made him rich and respectable.

Such was the man whom careless George Carlyon was about to trust implicitly with his business. There is one thing to be said for Carlyon—had Cormack been only honest, he possessed every other quality required for the position in which he was to be placed. It was only that one thing that he needed, and of course its absence was not suspected. Still no one perhaps but George Carlyon would have taken a man for so responsible a post, on no more evidence of his honesty than the fact that he was jolly fellow to meet at a mine-dinner.

Cormack had heard of George Carlyon often. His character was pretty well known throughout the county. Here, thought the adventurer, was just the pigeon to pluck—just the man to make use of and fleece. To his great delight he found Carlyon not only take a great fancy to him, but ask him over to his house, and propose—after a conversation as to steam engines, adroitly started by

Cormack—to take him into partnership. This the wily schemer felt was a safer game than the chances of mining. If he still wished to gamble—and he had the love of gambling latent within him—he might get Carlyon to speculate—or speculate with the money of the firm, and so gamble in safety.

At the appointed hour, and with most businesslike punctuality, Captain Cormack presented himself at Polvrehan. During dinner he made himself exceedingly agreeable, and entirely won Alice's good opinion. In the evening they had music, and he sang some Spanish ballads with good taste and a fair voice, and he taught Alice to play the Bolero and Cachuca, and when she had learnt to play them, showed her how they were danced.

He did not succeed quite so well in getting into Marian's good graces. Marian was a serious and high-principled girl, and there were many careless things he said which, she felt, were flippant and irreverent—although the others did not notice them.

It was the tone of his mind which displeased her. She told Alice of her objections, and got laughed at for her pains.

"You don't expect a young man—and

I'm sure he's young, dear—to be as solemn as a parson. You'll have to marry a bishop I'm sure, Marian, or you'll never find any one pious enough for you."

"I don't like people to be cynical and irreverent, Alice, but I don't want every one to be serious as a bishop. There are bounds, however, and once or twice Captain Cormack expressed sentiments I do not approve of, and spoke slightingly of feelings and things which should be treated with respect."

"Doesn't he sing nicely, though?"

"With great taste, and a thorough knowledge of music. But do you think that will cover a multitude of sins, like charity."

"There, now, don't go back to his faults again, Marian, or I shall be obliged to confess that sometimes I didn't like what he said. So kiss me for that confession, and good night!"

The next day Captain Cormack was over again, and the next, and the next. Each time he paid a visit of respect to the young ladies, and then retired with papa, and was closeted with him for the rest of the day. The discussion of the terms of partnership, and a host of details connected with it, were

ample excuse for these long consultations. But there was surely no necessity for the quantity of sherry drunk by these two confabulators!

Captain Cormack came away from these interviews as cool, collected, and steady as possible, but George Carlyon was generally so—"tired" he called it, that he lay on the sofa in his sanctum all the evening, and slept, breathing stentorously. He didn't get down to breakfast, either, any of these mornings.

At last the terms were agreed upon and the sum named. Cormack paid part in money and part in shares in a mine called Wheal Tolvading, situated in the western part of the country. At first George Carlyon seemed disinclined to take the shares.

"I never dabbled in mines yet, and I don't want to burn my fingers," he said.

"My dear sir, if you have not speculated in mines it is high time you began to do so. As a Cornishman, you will get every advantage, for I've observed that, though the miners will rob Londoners without scruple, they are tolerably honest to a brother Cornishman. There are fortunes and fortunes to be made at this game."

"And lost!" said Carlyon.

"Yes; but only by persons who have no experience or advice to go by."

"Well, I have no experience!"

"But, my dear sir, I have, and you can have my advice. This partnership of ours will swallow up my small capital for a while, or I should continue to speculate. But you shall have all the advantage of my experience and skill. You shall double your money in no time. And it's no bother at all!"

"I don't like beginning."

"Begin with these shares I offer. They are worth the price I place them at, at this very moment. You can turn them into cash on the spot, almost. But in a week's time they will be worth double. Take my word for it, they will be worth double, Mr. Carlyon."

"Well! I'll become speculator in my old age, and take the shares."

"You shall have the very best and soundest advice as to their disposal."

George Carlyon accordingly kept the shares, and, as Cormack predicted, in a week's time they had risen to double the value at which they had been estimated. The next week they rose a little more. "Now," said Cor-

mack, "Sell every one of them!" George Carlyon was not quite prepared to do so, but eventually acted on the advice, and had the satisfaction, in a few days, of seeing "Wheal Tolvadings" quoted at a figure much below what he had taken them from Cormack at.

The latter did not fail to call his attention to the fact, and also to the very large profit he had made by the transaction. Carlyon acknowledged that he owed his good fortune to Cormack, and determined in future to be entirely guided by his advice.

With great caution the schemer led his victim on. Speculation after speculation in the share market was adventured, and it seemed as if good fortune was fated to follow his indication.

Cormack pointed out an investment to Carlyon. In a few days it became the rage. He recommended him to sell out. It was as quickly down in the market. Some of this was luck; much was the result of information which Cormack purchased—at a heavy price it is true, but cheaply, considering what he got by it.

For to the old craving for excitement by drink George Carlyon was adding the craving

for excitement by gambling. Presently he was not content to limit his speculations to the investments Cormack pointed out. He began to speculate quietly on his own judgment, and as a rule he lost. But he could afford to do so, for the money he was making under Cormack's auspices was more than enough to pay. Cormack, in the meantime, was perfectly well-informed of all these private ventures, but he pretended to know nothing. He spent his time chiefly in learning the management of the foundry. He prevailed on Carlyon to exert himself for a few days, and put him into the best way of superintending and seeing that all was done well and expeditiously.

In a short time he had become virtually the proprietor. George Carlyon, busied with his new and exciting pursuit, never went near the works. By-and-by Cormack, as his partner began to speculate more widely and wildly, found means to get the business still more into his own hands.

What Carlyon wanted was ready money for his speculations. Cormack let him use the profits of the firm, taking as security—merely for form's sake, he explained to the other—a further quarter share in the busi-

ness in exchange for the loan. By degrees he allowed the gambler to run alone, and play his own game. The result was still heavier losses, and the demand for more money. Bit by bit he obtained a lien on the whole foundry, and even on the estate of Polvrehan, including the house. Then, like a wise man, he purchased, very quietly, the mortgages which already existed on the property. In short, he held the whole in his own hand.

This, however, all took time, and on several occasions, when some lucky stroke rehabilitated Carlyon for a while, the poor gambler would be seized with remorse, and clear off some of the encumbrances, only to plunge once again into speculation and involve himself afresh.

Cormack had more than once been asked by Carlyon to accept of the moorland, to which I referred in the first chapter, as security; but he always contrived to decline it, without apparently doing so on account of its being really of no value. The day came, however, when he offered to buy it.

Captain Cormack was a bit of a sportsman. He could throw a fly, as Rella's trout could bear witness; and he could kill a snipe on

the wing, as the moors above Merrimeet could testify. Of course he had free right of shooting and fishing all over the estate, and he exercised it.

He was strolling, gun in hand, on the moors close by one of the back-bones of granite rocks—upheaved by some mighty convulsion of earth how many centuries ago! —when he encountered a poor fellow known in the village as "Mazed Martin"—a half-witted creature who lived on charity. By the merest chance in the world Cormack, in a moment of good nature, had flung the unhappy wretch half-a-crown, and so secured his eternal gratitude. The village story was that "Mazed Martin" had been a wealthy tradesman in Truro, but had lost his all in mining. He spent the chief part of his time in wandering over the moors, "prospecting" for ore.

When he met Cormack he was trying the divining rod—a superstitious implement which is still believed in in the west country, and forms, no doubt, a capital tool for cunning to employ against credulity.

In language barely half intelligible for the gibberish he interspersed with it, Mazed Martin began to assure the Captain that he

had discovered a lode, and begged him to keep the secret. The Captain was to advance the money to begin working, and he and Martin were to share the profits.

Cormack only laughed at the poor creature. He could use the divining rod himself, and knew the trick. But while he was laughing a sudden thought occurred to him. These moors had not been tried for ore. They might be rich in metal. The general character of the place resembled that of one of the richest mining districts in the county. He began to examine the rocks more closely, and before long discovered certain indications which, to his practised eye, denoted that there was ore in the neighbourhood, although it was, of course, quite a matter of uncertainty as to whether it was present in sufficient quantities to make mining a profitable undertaking.

He devoted the next two or three days to a close and careful survey—of course, carrying his gun to make pretence of shooting. When he returned to Polvrehan without even a single snipe, you may be sure he was bantered by Alice. But he had found something more valuable than snipes on the moor! He had established the fact that the

district, if not a really rich mineral district, showed indications in sufficient plenty to induce speculative miners to try it, if it were once brought under their notice.

"I must get hold of these moors, somehow," he said to himself, as he turned towards Polvrehan. "Why didn't I think of this before, when he wanted to raise money on them? It doesn't matter, though; he's pretty certain to try it again, for the beggar must be in want of ready cash before long. I wonder what he lost in Carnseuth Consols? A pretty penny, I'll lay. And then Wheal Matilda and South Polmeddan, and Menabay must have let him in for something heavy. Is it not odd? When I started him in this line, I showed him exactly how to do things profitably,—when to buy and when to sell,—yet he makes these confounded blunders. Never mind! There must be fools in the world, or how are we honest men to live? And I hope he'll be fool enough to sell me the moors, and then I'll see if I can't find more fools to work the mines there, and pay me a pretty penny for leave and royalty. Providence is very kind to put so many fools in the world to support clever fellows. It's exactly like what that old whaling captain,

Johnson, of Newcastle, used to tell me about the Northern seas being all filled with little creatures the sailors call "whale's food." Master whale has only to open his jaws, and his dinner runs into his mouth. Upon my word, Providence is a wonderful thing after all!"

So musing—in quite a reverential mood you will perceive—Henry Cormack strolled into Polvrehan, in the cool of the evening, and joined the two girls on the lawn, Mr. Carlyon being in his study still, taking his after-dinner nap.

Henry Cormack had made no progress in Marian's good graces by this time, nor was Alice better pleased with him than at first—perhaps hardly as much.

CHAPTER IV.

TROUBLE AND AN ANODYNE.

FEW of the people who knew George Carlyon were aware of his difficulties. He had never had the character of being a speculator in mines, and the extent to which he had indulged his lately-acquired taste for that sort of gambling was not suspected. It was known that he had held shares in several very unlucky ventures, but it was supposed that he had been induced, from business motives, to encourage the new adventures, and it was argued that money lost in this way was merely a necessary outlay for the benefit of the foundry.

Every one said, "Oh, Carlyon can afford to throw away a good deal of money—look what a fortune he is making at the Works!"

It was quite true that the firm of Carlyon, Cormack, and Co. had been doing a roaring trade, and that enormous profits were flowing

in. But people did not know that those profits had been anticipated by the senior partner, and, in reality, belonged to the junior in consideration of former advances.

In the meantime the position which Cormack had at first maintained towards Carlyon was greatly altered. The junior partner began to assert himself, and resolutely put a check upon Carylon's inroads on their common property. It would have been a kind action in any one else. In the man who had first awaked the gambling spirit, it was merely selfishness.

George Carlyon fretted and fumed, but did not dare to quarrel with Cormack, so he sought refuge from his disappointment in drinking. Alas! what a wreck he had become now—mentally as well as physically! He no longer exercised the most common prudence in his speculations, but rushed headlong into those which his former experience should have told him were not trustworthy.

Cormack, on the other hand, as soon as he entered into partnership with him, had abandoned mining altogether. He never bought a share now, feeling that his present investment was a far safer one; he did not care to speculate when he was removed from the

close connection and relationship he had formerly held with the men who knew the real value and workings of the share market.

At last there came a time when Carlyon was reduced to the verge of bankruptcy. The nearness of the danger, suddenly revealed to him by the collapse of some bubble scheme in which he had embarked a great deal of money, sobered and steadied him for a time.

What was he to do? He could not ask Cormack to allow him to appropriate the profits of the business any longer; they were already doubly pledged to the junior partner. He could raise no more money on Polvrehan; it was mortgaged beyond its value now.

There was but one chance left. He strode to the window of the room, whence he could see the moorland stretching away northward, and, shaking his clenched fist at, cursed it for its barrenness. But it was the only thing he had to part with now, and he determined to try yet once again to prevail on Cormack to lend him money on those unprofitable acres.

When next the captain came over he was summoned into Mr. Carlyon's *sanctum*, and there, with tears in his eyes almost, the broken gambler entreated the young man to grant him this favour.

"Lend you money on gorse and granite, Carlyon? You can hardly expect it, surely. You remember that you have for some years past been draining the business of its very life-blood. Where am I to get the money to begin with?"

"Oh, you have enough. I know you have. You are rich—rich! You are coining money over yonder—you must be. Come, only a trifle—a few hundreds. If you don't I'm a ruined man."

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Carlyon—I'll buy the cursed unprofitable waste from you."

Carlyon paused.

"I don't like to part with the Polvrehan property, altogether, Cormack"—

"Oh, I don't want it. I should think you ought to know me better than to suppose I'm such an ass to wish to waste my money on that barren moor. It was only suggested for your convenience. Say no more about it."

"But I want the money."

"But I *don't* want the land; and you don't like to sell it if I did."

"I don't like; but then one must do things one doesn't like sometimes, Cormack!"

"Pray don't do violence to your feelings. I'd much rather not have the moor. *I* was going to do one of those things one doesn't like, in buying it to oblige you. Of course the obvious plan is for neither of us to hurt our feelings, and let there be an end of the matter."

"Don't be so hurried with me, Cormack, there's a good fellow. You're such a deuce of a man of business. Give me time—give me time."

"I'll give you as much time as you like. Time is money; but I suppose any amount of it will not make up the loan you require."

"No; I wish it could, Cormack; but don't joke about it—there's a good fellow—because, upon my soul, it is a serious matter. If I can't get this money I'm a bankrupt—a ruined, broken-down bankrupt!"

"I'm very sorry, indeed! But how can I help you?"

"By lending me the money on those acres yonder. You might just as well lend it as pay it."

Cormack was not quite prepared for this thrust. Of late he had found his partner so

intellectually enfeebled that he had spoken unguardedly. But he was not a man to be caught tripping.

"Well, if you must have my reasons—the money I should pay you for the land is money I have laid aside for the purchase of some ground near the works, on which to build cottages for the men, and so bring them close to their work and under my own supervision and power. The moor is further off than I should choose, if I were to select, but if I could oblige you by doing so, I would take it, and make it do."

"A capital idea! But you can build on the moor just the same, and make it a speculation of the firm."

"No, Mr. Carlyon. A joint speculation on ground belonging solely to you would be open to serious trouble and complication. I prefer to carry out the idea myself, for I am crochetty in the matter of building cottages for such purposes, and you might not enter into my views."

"Well, I suppose you must have it."

"No; there's no must in the case at all. Lee's farm is much handier for my purpose, and I believe he is willing to sell."

"Oh! I didn't mean that the 'must' was

yours so much as mine. I *must* have money. Do you object to one thing?"

"What is it?"

"Do you mind keeping the purchase a secret? I don't want people to know I'm parting with the family property. When I'm dead and gone—and that will be soon—it won't matter."

"I have no objection to that. And now what will you sell for?"

The bargain was settled that evening, and the acres of moorland became the property of Henry Cormack, who gave what was really a fair price for them, as far as appearance went, but which was very far below the value of them if, as he conjectured, they abounded in mineral wealth. He congratulated himself on his purchase.

What avail were the few poor hundreds to George Carlyon? If he could only make a lucky stroke with them, he thought. He exercised the greatest prudence and judgment in investing them, and for once his ventures were successful. He doubled his capital in a very short time, and then risked it all once more.

If that were fortunate, he made a solemn vow never to gamble in mines again.

Poor Carlyon, what were his vows worth?

Marian and Alice were of course kept in ignorance of their father's doings. They had seen that of late he had been very much depressed, and remarked with delight that he at last appeared to recover his spirits and become himself once more.

Marian was shrewd and observant, and she had noticed a change in her father—a feverish restlessness, and occasional fits of despondency—ever since his acquaintance with Cormack, and she did not hesitate to attribute them to the captain, though she did not know in what way he was connected with them.

Alice was less keen-sighted than her sister, but she had by degrees come to look on Cormack with something little short of aversion. But she was a good-tempered little thing, and not having any reason for her dislike, was angry with herself for feeling it, and took great pains to conceal it from the captain; who, on his side, flattered himself that he had made a considerable impression on her.

He was a vain man, and vain of a success which he thought always attended him in his dealings with women. He was easily

attracted by a pretty face, but there were no depths in his nature to be stirred by real love. Only transient passions, earthy and unrefined by nobility of soul, swayed him. He looked upon woman as an object to chase for amusement, to make love to for pleasure, and to fling away for weariness. At his first arrival at Polvrehan he had half determined to woo—and when he said "woo," he meant "win"—Alice for his wife. But when the first transient impression her pretty face and sweet disposition produced on him passed away, he began to see that such a step would be an error. He would encumber himself with a wife—a possession which, with his opinion of women and virtue, was only a source of anxiety and trouble—without obtaining any compensating consideration; for she was the younger child, and the property would naturally go for the most part to Marian. And the idea of chaining himself for life to that plain, sensible, quiet, good little woman was an act of suicide which he never contemplated for a moment.

Nevertheless, although he entirely abandoned the idea of seriously seeking Alice in marriage, he did not think it bad sport to pay her attention, and beguile the time in

flirting with her. There was no female society in the neighbourhood, and though he despised women, he liked women's society. One afternoon, as he was sitting with the girls and trying over a Spanish ballad he had written out the notes of for Alice, he was summoned to Mr. Carlyon's study. He found poor George Carlyon in a terrible state of agitation.

"What's wrong now, Carlyon?"

"Oh, everything—everything, my dear fellow. Upon my soul, I don't know what to do. And I am very ill too, and can't collect my thoughts—and by Jove I'm going mad with it."

"Come, come, be calm."

"Confound you, and your 'be calms;' and your stony face. There, there; I beg pardon, but I am half out of my senses."

"What has gone wrong?"

"Here, sit down and have a glass of wine. Won't you? What, not to keep me company?"

Cormack shook his head.

"What shall I do? what shall I do?" broke out Carlyon again; "I'm a ruined man. I haven't a penny in the world."

"What! been speculating unluckily again?"

"Worse than ever—worse than ever a thousand times over."

He began to walk up and down the room wildly, but watching Cormack out of the corner of his eye—for he had a favour to ask of him.

"What *am* I to do for money?" he asked at last.

Cormack did not answer. He sat with his elbows on his knees and his face bent down, so as to be in the shade.

"What *am* I to do for money?" repeated Carlyon.

Still no answer.

This was too much for George Carlyon's patience.

"Do you hear me say, Cormack, that I haven't a penny in the world?"

Cormack nodded.

"And you don't offer to help me!"

"What can I do?"

"Advance me some money on my share in the business."

"But, my dear Carlyon, you seem to forget that I have let you have money of the firm's already to a greater amount than your share is worth in the market."

"But surely you are not going to servo

me in this way when I'm in such difficulties? This is an act of friendship, not a business speculation."

"The best sort of friendship, in my opinion, Carlyon, is a strict and honest business dealing. I can't let you have any money. I have none, in fact."

This last was added to soften the refusal.

"Have none! Come, I know better than that, you hard-fisted, cool-headed beggar."

"I repeat I have none to lend you!"

"And yet I tell you that without this help I am utterly ruined."

"I regret it. But I can do nothing more."

Upon this poor George Carlyon burst into a fit of half drunken rage, passed from that into a state of maudlin grief, and finally leaning his head on the table sobbed pitifully like a weary child. Cormack tried to prevail on him to conquer his weakness, but the attempt only roused him to another paroxysm of fury. In these alternate fits of rage and misery, he at length worked himself into a state most pitiable to see. Even Cormack was touched by it. At least we must suppose so, for he took from his pocket a phial of dark-brown fluid.

"Look here, Carlyon, you've been overdoing it a little. Take some of this, it will soothe you and send you to sleep."

"Opium!"

"Yes; I learned its value when I was laid up with ague in Spain. I always carry a little stock. You lie down quietly for a bit and take a dose. Be careful though! Don't take more than one of the doses marked on the bottle. Two of them would kill you. And to-morrow we'll talk matters over."

"You'll lend me the money, won't you?" asked Carlyon, wheedlingly, as he took the bottle.

"No! It is impossible. We must see how you can extricate yourself with the least exposure."

Poor Carlyon knew what that meant, and his heart sank within him.

"Mind what you do with that bottle now, Carlyon. Two of those doses would kill you, remember. Be careful, there's a good fellow. Remember, two of them would be fatal. Good night."

And with that Captain Cormack returned to the parlour, and, sitting down at the piano, sang the Spanish ballad for Alice, and played much exquisite music.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE BORDERS OF BOHEMIA.

WHEN James Trefusis came to London he was very nearly becoming a castaway. A broad black stream of shiftless, careless, aimless, hopeless vagabondism crawls through that city toward the ocean of Oblivion, like another Thames, seeking the sea; and into it this poor fellow was almost on the point of plunging.

It seemed to him, when he quitted the western valley, that he left his life there, and was a living corpse only. He had nothing to look forward to, and he longed for rest, or, at all events, forgetfulness: and watching those who were drifting down the dark current, he envied them, and longed to follow their example.

He spent his days gloomily, and at night plunged into the gaiety of reckless company, carousing on the banks of the stream to

which he was approaching nearer and nearer every hour.

The black river I speak of touches at one point the border-land of the pleasant plains of Bohemia. Inhabitants of that country only too often wander down to its shores, launch their crazy craft, cut the moorings, go adrift, and are lost.

James Trefusis had by some impulse, some instinctive tendency, found his way to the borders of Bohemia soon after his arrival in town. He was speedily a naturalised citizen, and adopted the habits of the land. The particular province in which he settled—for Bohemia is a large state, and much subdivided—was inhabited chiefly by dreamers—men of science, who had not time to develop properly the splendid theories they had conceived—inventors, who lacked the capital to commence a work that was to turn mud into gold—authors, who had not wherewithal to buy pens and ink to begin the books which were to regenerate mankind.

In this out-lying district—as elsewhere in the vast kingdom of Bohemia—there was a large consumption of tobacco, with a considerable flow of spirits (animal and alcoholic), and an unlimited supply of beer.

Besides these, there existed much warm friendship, loyal fellowship, and a close brotherhood. Nowhere out of Bohemia could you find as sterling metal, I fancy. With all their differences and squabbles, the inhabitants were true to each other and their national cause. The people of this unsophisticated land did not stab one another in the back. They had practically a common purse, and consequently no jealousy about getting work for each other; and they kept a perpetual love-feast of content and bread and cheese.

James Trefusis was able to get engineering work, for he had letters of recommendation sufficiently strong to ensure that; but he did not care to labour now that he had lost the object for which he had toiled so willingly for the last years of his life. So he contented himself with periodical fits of energy, by which he got a little stock of money, and then he went back to his Bohemian haunts, and lived on it. He was foolish enough to think that he could find a refuge from memory in the glass, and for a time threatened to take after the model of his old patron.

He had several special cronies in Bohemia,

who frequented a quiet tavern in a bye-street near Long Acre.

There was the crazy painter, Charlie Crawhall, who made such charming water-colour drawings, when his hand was steady enough, but who was letting his genius waste while he talked about a delusion of his that I am afraid my reader will be tempted to smile at, as James did when he first found out what it was. Crawhall had asked James to come home with him one day to his chambers—an attic in a queer out-of-the-way inn, near Holborn. It was the home of genius, nevertheless. Out of the faded sprawling wall-paper, Charlie had in idly-industrious moments created, with a few touches of the pencil, all sorts of quaint figures. Here, a half-effaced convolvulus was fashioned into a ballet sylph; there, a geranium blossom was turned into a strange bird; in another place, a green leaf was converted into an animal or a fish. It was a perfect gallery of odd conceits. Scraps of paper, covered with unfinished sketches, for which dealers were dunning Charlie, lay about the floor. A few relics from his studio —long since abandoned—littered the room. A battered morion was appropriated to the

uses of a tobacco jar; a plaster head of Apollo was adorned with a red fez; and an ancient sword did duty for a poker. A dozen long clays, blackened by much use, were placed in an old Venetian goblet; and odds and ends of fine China were devoted to all sorts of unworthy purposes—to hold lucifers, cigar-lights, cigarette papers, and bills that were never to be paid.

Under the window stood an instrument not unlike a piano. James asked Charlie if he could play.

"Yes. Sit down and watch," was the answer; and James did sit down, and Charlie, placing himself in front of the instrument, opened it, and touched the keys.

No sound came from them; but at the back, as the artist's fingers wandered over the notes, rose discs of coloured glass—sometimes singly, sometimes together, or gradually passing in front of one another.

"Why, what on earth is that, Charlie?"

"Hush! Don't interrupt. Look! there's a lovely harmony; and then you see it dies away in a warm gray, just touched with the purple."

"What is the meaning of this?"

"He asks what the meaning is! Bless the man, have you no eye for music? This is my great invention, Jim, and I mean to make my fortune with it—only I can't find the right man to undertake to bring it out properly."

"Bring what out?"

"Why, this musical instrument. Don't you feel the music? Look here!" He turned to the notes again, and began to touch them.

The sun was pouring in through the window; and as the transparent discs rose and sank in the frame above the piano, they glowed with indescribable warmth and beauty. Now some pure tint would be shown—tender purple, or rich amber—and then some other hue would mingle with it, giving place to yet another; the colours now full and splendid—now sombre and grand—now soft and delicate.

"Now watch," said Charlie, growing excited as he leant over the instrument, and, at a touch of the noiseless keys, summoned up fresh combinations. "Now watch. See if you can find out the tune. But no! You're not used to it yet. You must cultivate your ear. I'll explain it to you. It's

a piece I call 'Spring.' You see it opens with a subdued blue; with a little tremulous gray—that's a difficult note, that gray—and then comes a little twinkle of soft yellow sunlight, followed by exquisitely tender greens—you see, charming variations, those greens—and then for the flowers, violets, and may, and buttercups. Look! is not that delicious? There are harmonies, old fellow! And then more sunlight; and now the rosy hues, for coming summer, and on to a subdued sombre purple for the close of day, with a delicate twinkling of silver light for the stars. There's a piece for you! You couldn't express one-half of that in music: this is the real sort of harmony. How do your eyes feel?"

"A little dazzled with looking at the sunlight."

"Ah, you've an uncultivated eye as yet. To me the harmony of colours is the most exquisite delight. Whenever I am stuck up in a picture I come here and play it, and you can't think what stunning thoughts I get."

"This is a queer thought, at any rate!"

"Not a bit of it. It is only appreciating music by another sense. The vibrations of

colour and the vibrations of sound are exactly the same, it's my belief, Jim. Why, I often see the colours of the different notes when people play; and I'm sure that music and colour are the same thing, only we call it by different names, according to the manner in which we are conscious of it. The feeling produced by a well-harmonised picture is identical with that produced by a well-harmonised piece of music. All painters are, in fact, musicians."

"Well, it's very odd; but I have noticed that most artists have some skill in music. It's very curious."

"No, it isn't, a bit. But I suppose you're like the rest of them. I've spent half my life in making that instrument, more than half my money in taking it about to different people—music-sellers and all sorts of people—trying to get them to do the thing on a large scale. But it's all no use—the fools don't see it. I suppose, when I'm dead and buried somebody will crib the notion, and make his fortune. There; light a pipe, Jim; and there's the whisky in that flask under the blunderbuss. I keep it there because the laundress daren't touch it while the firearm mounts guard over it."

Another of James Trefusis's cronies was Dr. Long; nobody quite knew where he had obtained the degree, but he was certainly a very clever fellow. His vision was the supposed discovery of an instrument which was to supersede the operation of trephining, and cure fracture of the skull in some very simple and speedy manner. A third crony was Harry Ryder, who used to spout passages from his great epic, "Cromwell"—a poem of many thousand lines, which had never been written down, and of which the metre was an extraordinary novelty. A fourth was a German, Groeller, a musician, who was always about to finish his opera, which was to surpass Don Giovanni and Der Freischutz. A fifth was a Dane, Kiste, who had travelled extensively, and had penetrated into the interior of Australia, crossed Central Africa, and wintered in the vicinity of the North Pole.

There were others who frequented the little tavern, but who were not such special cronies of James's. There were notably the two Latrowes, a pair of brothers, who passed themselves off as Bohemians, in order to plunder the aborigenes more conveniently. But as the Bohemians, having little to lose,

were a little sensitive in the matter of being robbed, the Latrowes had adopted a very cunning plan whereby the family partnership throve. Mark Latrowe used to be always warning people against his brother Jack, recommending them not to have anything to do with him. Jack was always starting some speculation or other which was to bring affluence to Bohemia, and Mark would join him, and the Bohemians, finding that he who had warned them against any dealings with Jack was willing to join, thought the plan must be an honest one. It always ended in Jack's robbing everybody, his own brother included. Whereupon Mark would make complaint, and the others, seeing that Jack had not spared his own kin, gave the matter up as a bad job, and put up with their loss, and then Jack and Mark divided profits. The schemes were various;—sometimes it was a new literary organ, sometimes a scientific paper, sometimes a picture gallery, sometimes the carrying out of a new invention belonging to a Bohemian, and not wanting any very large capital for its promotion.

I have here hastily sketched these few characters to realise to you in some degree

the position in which James Trefusis was placed. It was a trying one for a young man who had just lost his hold of the future, whose past had been a dream, and whose present was a dull dead gloom, without a glimmer of hope.

In a society which never took heed for the morrow, which indulged its tastes and avoided all labour, except when driven to it by want, James Trefusis was drawing nearer and nearer to the brink of the black river.

A couple of years of this life told upon him. His mind stagnated, and his spirit became enfeebled by inaction. By sudden outbursts of energy he contrived to earn plenty of money, and was, in fact, one of the wealthiest men in this portion of the Bohemian frontier — perhaps because also he declined to have any dealings with the Latrowes, who accordingly abused and libelled him whenever they had a chance.

His health began to suffer, too, not so much from any excesses—though I fear at this time he kept later hours and drank and smoked more than was good for him—as from want of exercise and wholesome air.

"Jim, you're looking ill. You'd better

get Long to give you a set-up," said Charlie Crawhall one evening.

"Let him trephine you," said Ryder.

"Well, youngster, what's wrong?" said the Doctor, leading James to the window. "Egad, you want change—no, not small change, Ryder; I knew you'd say so. You must get away for a bit, Jim, and keep quiet. Can you row?"

"Oh, yes; I'm a very good oar."

"That's right—it's a cheaper and better exercise than riding, I think. Well, you must go off somewhere along the river for a bit, and take lots of exercise."

"Go to Thames Ditton, Jim," said Charlie.

"Or Hampton," said Kiste.

"Better go down to Gravesend—somewhere seaward"—said Ryder.

"You're right, poet," said Long. "Either there or Greenwich—or better still, Blackwall. Lodgings are cheap, and the Park jolly."

"But I don't feel ill, and I don't want to be exiled."

"Come, none of your nonsense," said Long, "you must go, or you'll be laid up with a liver or a bilious fever, or something of that sort. You will, upon my word."

"O, if he won't go, we'll cut him," said Charlie.

It ended in James determining to take a week or so out of town. He pitched on Greenwich, and he and Charlie Crawhall went down and spent a jolly day, pretending to look for lodgings. Finally they pitched upon a place near Woolwich, where James got a room at a small cottage not far from the river, on very reasonable terms.

At first he was very lonely in his new abode, and began to brood over his old grief, so that his trip from town was likely to do him little good. But it happened one day as he was returning from a row on the river that he struck up acquaintance by some simple act of common civility with an old gentleman lodging at a cottage not far from his modest abode.

This old gentleman was a retired artillery officer, who on leaving the army settled down in the place where he was cut adrift. He was a clever old fellow, and had loved his trade, so that now, when he had nothing else to occupy his time, he employed himself in studying the science of gunnery, and had been experimenting on the construction of cannon.

In this pursuit James and he met on ground interesting to both. They worked away together; planning new modes of rifling, and new shapes for shot and shell. To have seen them engaged in discharging their model cannon, you would have been inclined to agree with Harry Ryder, who, coming down one fine afternoon to see how James was, found him, as he afterwards described it, "playing 'Corporal Trim' to some old boy's 'Uncle Toby,' and with practicable cannon."

But in spite of all their efforts they did not hit upon any successful improvement, though, as is often the case, they blundered upon one or two rather curious discoveries.

When James's time for returning to London came—which was when the lowness of his purse warned him—as plainly as the old Border dish of a pair of spurs spoke of "boot and saddle"—that he must turn to and earn some more money—he left his lodgings with great reluctance, and the old gentleman was wretched at the prospect of losing him.

However, James promised to run down and see his friend and fellow-labourer every Sunday—and kept his promise. The old

officer's neighbours used to be rather horrified at the pair, for they used to blaze away with their batteries in a way that made the pious jump as they dozed over their devout reading of an evening.

"We shall make our fortunes yet, Trefusis," the Captain used to say. "We are such a happy combination of qualities. You see, thanks to my experience in the Second Brigade, I know what is wanted to be done, and you know how to do it. If we could only perfect that rifle and conical ball scheme!"

"Well, when we do, and you're made a General of Artillery, Captain, you must pop me into a snug berth as Inspector of Gun Factories, or something of that sort."

"Why, my dear Trefusis, you must be dreaming! I was not thinking of our making a fortune in that way. We may do so by selling the armies, but as for getting it appreciated by Government, you don't know what an impossibility that is. When I am dead, and you are an old gray-headed man, they may see the merits of our invention, and then they'll rub all the best names out, and hardly say 'thank you' for 'em."

"That's not a cheerful prospect."

"It's the right one," said the Captain; and I'm inclined to think the Captain was right.

But this conversation, after all, was reckoning on unhatched chicks. James and the Captain had to invent their gun yet. When they had done that, it would be time enough to consider the difficulty of drawing the attention of the Government officials to it.

Up to this time, at all events, they had made no important step towards the desired invention. Still they worked on patiently.

This employment did James good in every way. He spent a good deal of his time with the old officer, and very little in Bohemia. What is more, he began to outgrow the bitter poignancy of his disappointment, and the difficulties which surrounded the task he was desirous of achieving stimulated him to persevere. He was one of those men who are encouraged by opposition. The more stubborn the secret, the more energetic were his efforts to master it.

So James Trefusis was led away by the gray-headed, simple soldier, with his toy

cannons—away from the Bohemian border, towards which, however, he still cast at times a regretful glance, and to which he sometimes returned for a brief visit. But he was an emigrant from that land of lotus-eating and beer-drinking and pipe-smoking now, and so, I am glad to think, was in less risk of sinking into that black river, which, sweeping by the lower shores of Bohemia, carries off, alas! so many stragglers to the ocean of Oblivion.

It is only fair to James to say that he did not pass out of the region to settle down in the land of real life without many regrets. Charlie Crawhall and his colour-harmonicon, Dr. Long and his surgical instrument, Harry Ryder and his epic, Groeller and his violin, and Kiste with his views on the negro question, were all fondly remembered long after, when James Trefusis was an entire exile from the wild land, and Bohemia knew him no more.

Pleasant, dear, kindly old Bohemia, does not every man who leaves you regret you, and do not all your sons think kindly of one another, and cling together and battle side by side? It must be a grand country which produces such sons, and a rare climate which

so fosters the virtues of friendship and fidelity. As Harry Ryder used to sing:—

"Here's the glass of Bohemia! Brim full you may pour it—
The lips that will touch it are honest and brave;
They are only good wishes, by true hearts breathed o'er it
In fellowship loyal, that trouble the wave.
Then a fig for the prudish, the cold, the abstemious!
Whatever the liquor—come fill, fill it up;
For me there's no glass like this glass of Bohemia's,
It suffers no poison to lurk in the cup."

CHAPTER VI.

MR. ORR, M.P., AND FAMILY.

MR. ORR, M.P. for Brybemhall, was one of the wealthiest bankers in wealthy Lombard Street. He had the reputation at least of being preposterously rich. His money must have been a positive burden to him, in spite of his having contested and won the borough of Brybemhall. Brybemhall is a pleasant little town, with two evenly-balanced political parties in it, and a large body of shifting and uncertain voters, locally known as the "bloaters and floaters," who sometimes voted on one side and sometimes on the other for reasons which I know no more about than the Man in the Moon—indeed, very much less about them than that mysterious lunatic. For whenever a new writ was issued for Brybemhall, the Man in the Moon came down—not too soon, but in very good time—and asked certain questions—not

about the way to Norwich—and made certain arrangements mutually agreeable to candidate and constituents. It was he who "squared" the borough for Mr. Orr, who entered the House as a regular true-blue supporter of Church and Crown.

Mr. Orr was a Conservative, most probably because it was so eminently respectable, implying that he had had ancestors and inherited traditions to cling to. Now, in sober truth, his ancestors were mere fortunate nobodies who made money in mysterious ways during the French war. It may appear odd, but it is nevertheless true, that their obscurity did not prevent his discovering their portraits in the possession of an enterprising dealer, resident in Soho, who must clearly have bought them —when the Orr estates (in Ayr, we will say) went to the hammer—with a prophetic eye to the future fortunes of the race.

In reality, Mr. Orr had no political opinions. He could not give you his sentiments on any Parliamentary question until he had read his paper of a morning. He got out of bed a bifurcated receptacle for other people's opinions. He rose from his breakfast table a full-fledged senator. Considering this, his choice of a party was eminently creditable to him.

Had he selected the other side he might have made his principles profitable, instead of their being expensive luxuries. Perhaps, after all, this choice of party to a man of his plethoric riches was a wholesome species of gold-letting. He even went so far as to be part proprietor of a true blue daily paper, which was a dead loss every day. And as for those subscriptions towards the secret service fund for which his club was noted, few men gave more handsomely than Mr. Orr.

I am inclined to think that the realisation of all his political aim and ambition consisted in the tagging of two labials to his name, the privilege of talking of "Russell" and "Disraeli" on familiar terms, and the pleasure of seeing his name in the division lists of the *Times*. It was an expensive taste, but the wealthiest banker in wealthy Lombard Street could afford to indulge it.

Mr. Orr was a married man, and the father of a family. His wife was a fat vulgar woman, who, unlike her husband, had been unable to accommodate herself readily to the society into which she rose with the rising fortunes of the bank. But society did not appear to discover any fail-

ings in her. In the eyes of the world a doll would be a "dear, good, clever creature" if it were only dressed in tissue of gold.

There were three children. The eldest was a girl, who had been christened Honoria, in affectionate remembrance of a fictitious ancestress in blue satin and a broad-leaved hat, who smiled with a feebly surprised air, as if startled at her relations with this family, from a massive gold frame over the sideboard in the dining room. If family portraits converse—and one certainly hears of "speaking likenesses"—how strange must have been the colloquies held in that dining room! The long-haired cavalier in the breast-plate, with a very hot siege going on in the background, must have wondered what he had in common with the divine whose locks were cropped short, and who had one finger slipped between the pages of what should, from all appearance, have been a pamphlet condemnatory of Charles Stuart, "falsely styled king." As for the stout gentleman, with a three-cornered hat and a good round stomach, who resided in the immediate neighbourhood of two pillars and a very red curtain, he must have been at a loss to trace his relationship to the tall pale

lady in white satin, who was pretending to pet a parrot, and whose feet must have been very cold in such thin slippers, on a floor of black and white marble lozenges.

These, however, were the ancestors whom Miss Honoria Orr and her brother and sister were brought to reverence and regard. Honoria did not reflect the charms of the beautiful women in the family pictures. She was a tall, pale, delicate girl, who was afflicted with weak eyes and timidity. Between her and the other two children there was a very considerable difference in age. For ten years after Honoria's birth Mr. Orr was under the painful impression that he would have to leave his wealth to an heiress. But the fates decided otherwise. To his vast delight, after that lapse of time, Mrs. Orr presented him with a son, and in the following year with a second daughter; after which feat she appeared to consider that she had done the state sufficient service.

Unfortunately the son and heir was a delicate boy, and showed but little promise. Great accordingly was the anguish of Mr. Orr's soul.

Of what avail was it that every day of his life he rolled into the city from his mansion

in Grosvenor Place, in a yellow chariot, with two spanking horses and a couple of grand footmen? What comfort could he draw from the coat of arms emblazoned on the yellow panels;—or, on a bend gules three bezants; crest, a bezant, winged gules; motto, "Ore rotundo"? What did it matter that men on 'Change bowed down to him as a sort of Rothschild of British manufacture, and that foreign Princes and Grand Dukes borrowed money of him, presenting him with rings and snuff boxes, rough with diamonds, in acknowledgment of his lending them thousands at goodness knows what per cent.? What did it benefit him that he rode home at night to such a table and such wines as would respectively ruin the digestion and goutify the joints of a man with a constitution of iron?

What, in short, is a canary-coloured chariot, or a resplendent coat-armour, or a thriving business, or clear turtle-soup, or thirty-four port worth to Mr. Orr, if he cannot purchase health and brains for his only son?

If you find out the cleverest physician in the world, and, instead of his guinea, give him that bank note for a million, which is

framed and glazed in Threadneedle Street (and a pretty picture it makes too), and which a foreign prince, on having it shown him, was about to pocket as a delicate cadeau from the directors;—that cleverest physician cannot do more for you than he would for the twenty-one shillings—ay, or for nothing, for the poor creature who crawls to his gratis consultation.

The cleverest physician in the world could no more infuse healthy vitality unto that stunted child of Mr. Orr's than he could raise him from the dead, even though half the business in Lombard Street were offered as a reward for his skill. Nor could the wisest and most patient teacher in the world prevent the learning and morals which he poured into that lad's one ear from coming out of the other, because there was nothing between to intercept the lessons.

What can become of such a lad? What does become of such lads? A debased youth, a loose life, a bankruptcy of health and wealth, and things even dearer—the decrepitude of old age at thirty, and the workhouse or lunatic asylum, or, in mercy, the grave soon after.

No wonder that Mr. Orr was so sad and

staid a man that people in the Stranger's Gallery at the House, thought he must be a very wise man, and mistook him for some Parliamentary star.

To think he had toiled and moiled and worn his life out, till his forehead was seamed with wrinkles and his hair sprinkled with gray, to accumulate wealth for this poor idiot child. It was enough to make a man sad and grave. But perhaps it was not this alone that threw a dark shadow over the prosperous banker's face. It is fair to suppose that a large business like his was a cause of anxiety.

Mr. Orr was a very pious person, too, and pious persons as a rule are the reverse of cheerful. Mr. and Mrs. Orr "sat under" the Reverend Ichabod Inwards, at a fashionable chapel in the neighbourhood of Grosvenor Place, and went every Sunday regularly to be edified. And if the perpetual parading of punishment to come is edifying, they were very fortunate. For the Reverend Ichabod Inwards was a sort of spiritual bull-fighter, and treated a sinner as a *torrero* treats the animal out of whom he is to get amusement for the assembled multitude. He plunged darts into his side, and waved flags before

discover the magnitude of Mr. Orr's donation.

He was a great and good man, a pious and generous Christian.

Virtue is its own reward, however, and it is comforting to think that his conduct was not unproductive of profit. In whom could the widow and the fatherless repose confidence (in the shape of their little all of worldly wealth) if not in this open-handed friend of the distressed? In whom could respectable people trust if not in this respectable chapel-goer?

If Mr. Orr ever struck a balance between his piety and his profits, he must have found the latter heavily indebted to the former. And, as I observed before, it is a comfort to think so!

I have said Mr. Orr was a careful speculator in his charities. He was a shrewd calculator in every relation of life. He never threw a sovereign away. He never expended money without a fair expectation of a return. Why should he?

In every sphere of life the circulating medium of that sphere is a thing to be taken care of. You and I, reader of mine, should think little of a handful of shells. But a

native of India or Africa would think twice ere he flung away a cowry. It is current coin, and he is as careful of it as we are of pence and shillings. In Mr. Orr's province pence and shillings are comparative cowries: the sovereign was his standard of value, and he dealt very tenderly with money even of that low denomination. He was—to confess the truth—mean! But then when a man has coined his youth and manhood, his health and hopes, into yellow metallic discs, you can hardly be surprised if he sets store by them.

How much of the worship of Mammon has mingled with the form of devotion just over at Mr. Ichabod Inward's chapel? The gentlemen have all read the names of the makers in the crowns of their hats twice, and the ladies, rising, give one final sweeping survey of the bonnets, and pew-doors begin to bang, as the organ, after a premonitory wheeze and whistle, launches forth the voluntary. The Rev. I. Inwards has emerged from the velvet cushion into which he plunged as if about to take a refreshing header after the warmth of his own description of torments to come, and is gazing around blandly, but asking himself secretly whether he can have

done anything to offend the Plumperanns, whose pew has been vacant now for three consecutive Sunday.

The canary-coloured footman has collected the elegantly-bound volumes from the Orr pew. Mrs. and Miss Orr, shaking out reefs of silk and muslin, are being towed out of chapel in the wake of papa, who holds a very spotless beaver above the heads of the departing congregation, and bows in a furtive manner to acquaintances who catch his eye —as if it were wrong to be a friend to any one in church.

Very much in the same order they walk home, with the yellow footman behind, carrying the books. One cannot help feeling how self-denying it is of persons, who keep a footman, to go to Divine worship at all. Why could not the menial who carries the books do that duty for them? Such humility is positively affecting, and I feel inclined to take off my hat to Mr. Orr, as the crossing-sweeper does—and gets nothing for his civility, there being no one in sight to be a spectator of charity except the footman aforesaid, who is not to be deceived by appearances, in the face of his closely-pared wages, and narrowly-watched perquisites.

When the procession reaches Grosvenor Place, the yellow one thunders portentously at the door, which is flung open, and the Orr family enters, conscious of having done a duty, which might have been avoided, in a very proper and instructive manner.

Lunch is announced presently—a formal and chilling meal gone through, in the presence and under the superintendence of two canary-coloured footmen and a butler, who looks like an evangelical minister with an inflamed nose. It is one of the great privileges of wealth to have your wine administered to you in doses, as if it were medicine, by a solemn person who has the power of making you drink what he likes, and to have your soups and side dishes handed to you with a delicate garnishing of hair powder—a luxury for which you have to pay something handsome annually to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

After lunch there is an adjournment to the drawing-room, where Mrs. Orr receives a few callers. She does this under a sort of tacit protest, which she makes quite appreciable to her visitors. She would not think of seeing any one on Sundays if it were not that on other days Mr. Orr is engaged in

the city at the usual calling time, and she must, therefore, consent to sacrifice some of her scruples. But by way of a corrective, the drawing-room table is cleared of the handsomely bound secular volumes, which adorn it in the week, and in their place Mr. Inward's collections of sermons, ponderous tracts, and works of controversial theology, are strewn upon the velvet pile, with other "good" books—so good that apparently a very little of them goes a long way, for few of them are cut.

In one of the pauses between two calls, when the last visitor has been removed in a state of collapse by the canary-coloured, and before a fresh one is ready to be served up, a conversation takes places between papa and mamma, Honoria being seated at the piano, from which she is extorting a very agonised sacred melody.

"My dear," says Mrs. Orr, sitting on the sofa, watching her husband, who, with his elbows on his knees, is bending forward over the fire, breaking with the poker the little gaseous bubbles that exude from the fusing coal, "My dear, it is time we either sent Algernon to school, or got a teacher for him."

"What ought one to give her, my dear?"

"Not much. I shouldn't offer much. If you want one that would be generally useful, you must offer a low salary, or you'll get hold of some stuck-up miss that won't do anything. Those who are glad to work cheap will be ready to do more for the money."

"There, I never should have thought of that!"

"I know it's the case. I remember my mother gave Jane's governess fifty pounds a year, and she gave notice because she was told to hem some tablecloths, or something of the sort; and we got another for half the money, who was as useful as a lady's maid to Jane."

"Shall I advertise, dear, or go to look for one? I suppose you can get them at the registration places, the same as other servants?"

"No, I fancy not. But you can write and ask Jane; she has engaged one for her children."

"Ah, to be sure; I had forgotten that, my dear. She will be able to tell me everything about wages and all."

At this moment there came a knock at the front door, whereupon Miss Orr fluttered timorously away from the piano, Mrs. Orr snatched up a volume of the Reverend Ichabod Inward's Sermons, and opened on one touching "Our duty towards our neighbours," while Mr. Orr plunged into a small pamphlet by Scarifier, on the "Revision of the Liturgy;" so that presently, when the canary-coloured announced "Mr. Twodhill" that amiable and nervous young gentleman felt that he was ushered into the presence of all that was lovely and pious and patriotic.

On the Monday following this cheerful Sunday, Mrs. Orr despatched a note to her sister-in-law, Mrs. Bullyan, touching the right means of procuring a governess for Algernon and Alicia. In the course of a few days, Mrs. Bullyan replied at length—a whole sheet of pink note-paper, crossed. The result of this correspondence was that before long there appeared in the supplement of the *Times*, but a few paragraphs removed from the "wanteds," referring to cooks, housemaids, and laundresses, the following advertisement:—

RESIDENT GOVERNESS.—WANTED, in a Gentleman's Family, a lady, not over 30 years of age, as GOVERNESS, to take the entire charge of two young Children, and instruct them in English, French, and Music. She must be a member of the Church of England, cut out and make children's clothes, and wash and dress them. Salary £30, and all found.—Apply, etc. etc.

I think I can see some of my readers smile at this, and set it down as an exaggeration. I can assure them it is nothing of the sort. With a few slight alterations, which the state of the present copyright law renders necessary, in order to avoid difficulties, that advertisement is a mere repetition of one which I have seen in the *Times*. You have only to look at the Governess column of the supplement and you will learn that I am not in the slightest degree overcharging the picture. There are, you will there discover, many rich and respectable people who are content to trust the future and the hereafter, the characters and the morals of their children to a person whose wages they fix at a mere shade above what they give a housemaid, and a good deal below what they give a cook.

CHAPTER VII.

THE UNFOLDING OF A DULL DAWN.

THE morning broke gray and chill over Polvrehan. After the quenching of the stars, came no rosy light to kiss the hill-tops. A pale dawn, like the ghost of day-light, stole upward; and the purple of night mingling with it, an ashen sky was all that resulted as evidence of morn. Rella caught the infection, and instead of bustling by blue and bubble-beaded, shuddered along a leaden-coloured stream. And the winds that swept down the valley were weird half-hushed breezes, in which the trees seemed to wave their arms mournfully, and croon like the "keeners" at an Irish funeral.

But though it was a dull day that broke thus over Polvrehan, it could exert no depressing influence on the life which abounded all about there. The kingfisher went flashing over the stream to his favourite perch;

the rabbits were leaping over the fern; and the rooks flapped slowly a-field overhead. Up burst the starlings from the osiers, and hurtled away over the hills. The lark sprang from his lowly nest in the furrow, and mounted—up—up—up—as if he were trying to see where the sun was, that he was so late.

And if Life went on all the same in the little valley, Death was equally busy. Down flashed the kingfisher from his perch—a gleam—a struggle—and the jewelled bird was back again on his naked branch overhanging the water, with a fine fat trout in his strong beak. There was a rustle in the fern, and a lithe stoat, springing like a snake upon a passing rabbit, brought him to the ground. In vain poor bunny struggled and shrieked; the sharp cruel muzzle was buried in his neck, and his murderer would never quit his hold till he had drained the last drop of his life-blood. The rooks with outspread pinions settled on the furrows in the ploughed land, and then there was much mourning in the families of grubs and worms. The starlings, whirring off to the pastures, took their share in the destruction of the insect world. The lark, having finished his matins, and

slept in all night, and he's locked up the study. I reckon he's poorly, dear."

Marian sighed, for she knew what that meant. Of late she had listened and waited once or twice for that stumbling uncertain step on the stair, and listened in vain, till she dropped off asleep from sheer weariness.

On these occasions he had generally been out at some festive gathering, and Nancy had waited up for him. Poor old Nancy was nurse to this poor fellow, who was drinking himself into a second childhood. She used to see him safe to bed on these occasions, and take away the light. But for such care that quiet valley might have been lit up some night with the ruddy glare of the burning house of Polvrehan.

But sometimes latterly he had come back in such a state that Nancy had consented to leave him, as he wished, to sleep on the sofa in the study. He had sense enough left to know he could not get upstairs without making a noise that would wake the girls; and as he always believed himself sufficiently cunning to have concealed his failing entirely from them, he was very scrupulous about disturbing them in this way.

As he had not been out anywhere on the

house were a corpse and she buried alive with it? A fever seemed coursing through her veins, and made her hands tremble so that she could scarcely fasten her dress. She dashed some cold water—how cool, how deliciously refreshing!—over her face, and then flinging up the window looked the cold dull day in the face. Compared with the terrible stillness of the house, the dawn seemed positively sunny and joyous. There was health in the breeze that blew upon her burning forehead.

She hastened down stairs, and knocked at the study door—once, twice, quietly. Then becoming nervous, and perhaps to break the terrible spell of silence, she knocked louder—and louder yet.

No answer; not a sound; not even a breath to be heard in that locked chamber.

The terrible truth for which the instinct of horror that smote her in her own room had been trying to prepare her, came upon her now vividly, and past all power of denial.

She turned from the door. For a moment she and Nancy stood face to face. And in the young girl's eyes the old woman read the terrible truth.

"God help us, not *that*, I trust, in his mercy!"

Marian shook her head mournfully, and smote her two hands together as if in a sudden spasm of pain.

What was to be done? They stood pondering for a minute or two. They knew the worst, it seemed to them, and of that knowledge came that peculiar calmness and clear sight which, in the immediate and inevitable presence of danger and distress, seem to come to us as a mercy direct from Heaven.

The same idea occurred to both at once, and each divined the other's thought.

"Yes! follow me," said Marian, and she hastened out at the window opening on the lawn, and passed round to the front of the house. The lawn was already alive with the feathered pensioners who came daily for the crumbs from the breakfast table. They startled away from their benefactress as she came hurriedly out. She did not notice them, or hear Rella's prattling, or heed the lovely beds of blossom already wooed by constant bees who were not to be frightened from their courtship by a dull day.

As she passed round the corner of the

house, Jock, the housedog, jumped at a bound to the end of his chain, and choked himself off-hand with delight, at what he considered a visit in his special honour. But he got neither look nor caress. The swing of his tail was checked fitfully—his ears drooped—and after standing a minute the very picture of forlorn fidelity, he slank back to his barrel of straw, dragging his chain mournfully clinking after him.

And now the old woman and Marian have reached the front windows—the windows of that closed study—which reach almost to the ground. They are not hasped. In this quiet valley they never thought of barricading their houses; Jock was sufficient guard against tramps and thieves, who were mere provincials—against casual tramps, not professional and scientific house-breakers, who have a large capital invested in the finished implements of their business, and who even have a balance at their bankers' at times. The windows were not hasped. The shutters were not barred, they were only pushed to; one pair were a little apart—just a chink—through which the daylight was doubtless streaming in. To what did that finger of dawn point?

The windows were not hasped. The shutters were not barred. Just now Marian was beating at that locked door as though she wished to force her way into the room. She would have done so, perhaps, had she possessed the strength. But the lock and the hinges were stout, and it would have needed a strong man to break open that door.

But now, where she stood in front of the house, the windows, I repeat yet again, were not hasped and the shutters were not barred. Still she hesitated. When the terrible truth was shut up within the bolted door she burned to penetrate its mystery and know all. Now, when at the touch of a hand the window would open and the shutters fall back and show her all she but now desired to know, she was struck motionless.

Nancy Vian raised the sash. The damps of morning made it cling to the sill for a moment, and when it rose it gave a subdued shriek that made Marian's blood curdle. Another brief breathing space of delay—they listened to learn whether they had disturbed Carlyon. There was no necessity for their doing so.

Marian, with a nervous, hurried gesture,

pushed back the shutters. The pencil of light in the darkened room widened out, and the day shone in.

The two women stept into the room, and stole to the sofa on which George Carlyon was asleep.

He was sleeping very soundly indeed; so soundly, that the clamour at the door could not rouse him; so soundly, that the shriek of the raised sash could not disturb him; so soundly, that no earthly sound shall ever again wake him.

This Nancy learns the first. Instinctively she lays her hand on that of George Carlyon, and the hand she touches is marble.

"Aw, my dear, my dear," she sobs, as she turns round and catches Marian in her arms, "Aw, my dear, he have a-gone—he have a-gone. Aw, my dear, what shall us do? God rest him, poor dear, for he have a-suffered, I know, and God help his poor childer!"

And then Nancy, loosing her hold of Marian, who stood motionless—stupified by the certainty of what she had dreaded—slid down beside her, kneeling by the sofa, and praying and weeping from a heart full to bursting.

By-and-by Marian began to recover herself a little. Then she too fell on her knees beside her father's corpse and kissed the clay-cold forehead. And at that touch the fountain of tears was unsealed, and the grief which had been so speechless until then found an utterance in half-choked sobs and broken lamentings.

So these two women knelt by the body, and in the meantime Nature, which seems so heartless but is so tenderly thoughtful—for why should your sorrow or mine, your death or mine, blot the beauty of the universe for the rest of mankind?—tenderly thoughtful Nature worked out all her wonderful phenomena of daybreak.

A step crushing on the gravel recalls Nancy to the consciousness of her duties. She creeps noiselessly to the window and sees Martin, the lad who looks after the pony. Him she despatches at once to Mr. Cormack. It is useless to send for the doctor she knows:—it is not the first death she has seen, and she is perfectly aware that nothing can restore warmth to that icy hand she touched a little while since.

As she returns to where Marian is kneeling, she catches sight of something on the

table which surprises her into an exclamation. Marian looks up, and following the direction of the old woman's eyes, she too sees something on the table that makes her turn cold.

On the table is an empty brandy bottle, a decanter with some sherry in it, and a wine glass. But the dregs of liquid in that glass are not the dregs of either sherry or brandy. A few drops of brown strange-smelling fluid have collected in the bottom. Two large brown spots have fallen on the papers that lie on the table, and, as an artist would say, lead the eye to the place where lies an empty phial.

And the label on that phial is "LAUDANUM," and beneath that label is another, on which is printed in large, black, impressive letters the word POISON. The anodyne which Henry Cormack gave his friend and partner on the evening before this fatal dull dawn—this gray sorrowful daybreak of which Marian now, at last, seems to learn the meaning—has brought to the ruined gambler the only real anodyne—Death.

"I—I—did not know that he took *this*," whispers Marian to the old woman.

"No, my dear, nor he dedn't. I never

knowed him take it before, and I've a-knowed all as he ever took, poor dear."

"Then"—

But Marian had not the heart, the courage, to put into words the awful, the overwhelming conclusion which was thus forced upon her. Nancy understood the thought, and felt that, shocking though it was, it was the only solution of the mystery.

Hitherto she had touched the corpse reverently; dead George Carlyon was "the master" still, fondly as she regarded him. The loyal old domestic had wept and prayed by the body, had even clasped the cold hand, but this was no more than a servant might do. But now, when she discovered this truth, which made his daughter shrink and cower before it, it seemed to her that the dead man had need of friendship and sympathy. His misfortune—this last dark, terrible deed, at which I will only hint—seemed to have brought him to a level, at which even her love might be a comfort and solace.

She bent over, and kissed him on the cheek, murmuring—

"My poor dear, you'm not accountable for't. 'Twas sorrow and drink brought you

to it, when ye didn't scarce know what you was doing. My poor dear, God forgive you and us all."

Marian took the poor old woman—the kindly, faithful, affectionate old creature, who had nursed her on her knee, and rocked her to sleep so often—by both hands, and kissed her on the lips; and then once more the whole extent of her bereavement, and the appalling circumstances surrounding her father's death, came upon her, just as the widening dawn poured into that mournful chamber, and she fell on the old woman's neck and sobbed most piteously — heart-rendingly.

What is this song that rings through the house? What sweet, clear voice is this that reaches this scene of sorrow and anguish?

Tripping down the stairs, with one white hand on the balustrades, dressed in a soft muslin that flutters like wings about her as she descends the sombre staircase, with her golden hair catching every faintest notion of sunlight that is afloat on such a dull morning—here comes bonnie Alice from her quiet little bedroom, where she has been dreaming of her fairy prince, while her sister has been waking to such horror below.

What is the song she sings, as she glides down the old staircase?

> "Ay ojuelos verdes,
> Ay los mis ojuelos,
> Ay hagan los cielos
> Que de mi te acuerdes!"

It is the Spanish ballad which Captain Cormack was teaching her last night—the ballad which he taught her with such happy good humour after he had left her father with two things staring him in the face—two things for which her father was chiefly indebted to him—ruin and poison. For Henry Cormack had just as much brought bankruptcy on his friend and partner, as he had placed in his hands in the little phial the tempting anodyne, which was so powerful to set grief and distress and perplexity to sleep for ever.

How discordantly that sweet voice smote on the ears of the two women in the presence of the dead!

Marian glided from the room—met Alice at the foot of the stairs, and before the astonished girl could ask the meaning of her disturbed looks, placed her finger on her lips, and hushed the song. Then she led her into the pretty little parlour, opening on the lawn,

where they had spent so many happy hours, and then and there she told her what had happened. What could Alice do but weep for the fond father who had so petted and caressed her! She was wrung by a very agony of grief, which her delicate and yielding nature could not resist. Hysterical and fainting fits followed each other in rapid succession, and the poor girl was carried up-stairs, and put to bed, scarcely less insensible than George Carlyon himself, lying there on the sofa in the study, with the sun, now at last escaped from the imprisoning clouds, coming round to look in at the windows in front.

As the sun streams in through those windows presently, the figure of a man intercepts the rays suddenly, and its long shadow flung across the floor seems to creep like a deadly serpent towards the couch where the body lies.

It is Henry Cormack.

The first thing he does is to pour some wine into the glass with the brown sediment, rinse it out, and fling away the contents on the gravel outside the window. He wipes the glass carefully on his coat-tail, pours a little more sherry into it, and then takes up

the phial and puts it into his pocket. Then he leans over the body of his late partner, and a smile of contempt and triumph passes over his cold, cunning face.

"I've been harder pushed than you, and yet I never was such a fool as this," he murmurs to himself; "I wonder he had pluck enough left in him even to do this act of cowardice."

Then he turns away—leaves the room by the window he came in by, and enters the house in the regular manner, and asks to see Marian.

The interview is a long one. He soon elicits from her that she and Nancy had seen the phial, and drawn the one inevitable conclusion. He then advises her to keep her suspicions a secret, and tells her what he has done to remove all trace of the wretched deed. For this forethought and promptitude I need hardly say she is deeply grateful. She is the more grateful because it is an action she would never have suspected him capable of.

The next step is to send for Dr. Johns, in his twofold capacity of physician and coroner of the district. He comes in the course of the afternoon, and is very much shocked,

but for the sake of his professional reputation says that he always feared this, and had warned Carlyon frequently. Then he makes arrangements for holding the inquest, which he promises to contrive so as to spare the girls all the pain he can. In consideration of which he expects—and gets—a glass of hot gin and water from Nancy, who knows his weakness and the strength he admires.

CHAPTER VIII.

"VISITATION OF GOD."

"MARN'N, Muster Rosewarne."

"Quite well, I thank'ee. How be yeu?"

"Not much to brag o'. And how be Muster Lusky?"

"Oh, bra'ave, thank'ee."

"Tur'ble sudden, this here, warn't it now?"

"Ees sure. Out like a snuff. How's yer turmuts lookin?"

"Vairish. What are you for?"

"Well, I waen't take anythin 'till after verdick, I thank'ee."

"Haw! haw! That's a good 'un! Did'ee hear 'un, Garge? I was axin mun what he was for—meaning sudden death or nat'ral causes, and he thoft I was axin of 'un to take a crem o' liquor."

"Haw! haw! haw! That's a good 'un anyhow!"

"How's Messis Rundle then?"

"Aw, her's com'ftable enough, I reckon."

"Es't a boy or a gal?"

"Oh, tes a boy this time. And how be your good lady, Mester Chynow'th?"

"Whoy, her's a down to Truro along wi' her friends for a cha'ange loike. You'm best coom and see a chap now he's a bagelor, I'm thinkin."

"Oh, here com'th Doctor Johns at la'ast. I reckon we'll soon get un auver now."

"Who's voreman?"

"Muster Lusky, in coose."

"Ees sure, Muster Lusky he be voreman."

"I reckon you chaps is most of 'ee for sudden death, eh?" asks Mr. Lusky of his brother Jurymen, to whom my readers are indebted for the above very edifying conversation.

"From what I can hear 'tis most like that, Muster Lusky," says Mr. Rosewarne.

"Well, I'm agen it then," says Mr. Chynoweth, "we've been having a many of them lately, and I'm for cha'ange. We shall have yon young feller as write them articles in the

Gazette sayin' as we can't find nowt else to say."

"Well, I reckon, us need'n mind a poor half-starved chap like yon, a poor critter as writes for the papers, Mr. Chynow'th."

"Maybe yeu don't go to ma'ark't zo often as I do, or yeu wadn't like for to be made vun of down to Bell tap."

"There's a bra'ave deal in what yeu'm both a-sayin' of," says Mr. Lusky, interrupting in the interests of peace.

"Let's see if we ca'ant fix on summut new to plaze Muster Chynow'th then, Muster Lusky."

"I baint for tryin' new verdiks," interposes another Juryman, "we had a inques' down to Bodmin a while since, and that there chap he made a pretty face and laughed at us vine, I can tell ye. And what vor? Why, on'y becos we axed Muster Gilbert, the Coroner, for to append to a verdic of 'Found drowned in a gravel-pit' the explanation 'there being water in the place.' I'm agen anythin' new."

"What's the other regular verdicks, Muster Lusky? you ought for to know, for you hev sat on more bodies nor most people."

"Why there's 'Accidental death,' and

'Justifiable homi'-some'ut'; and, let me see, why, 'Nat'ral causes,' and 'Fellow deceased,' and—and—there now, I'm certain sure there's another, but I ca'ant reca'al 'un. Oh! 'Visitation of God,' that's it; and I'm thinking it's the very one as we'm a-looking for."

"Ay, that hur be!" is the general chorus.

"Mind ye, he's a clever chap is Muster Lusky," the jurymen whisper to each other.

By this time the coroner, having had an interview with the girls, enters the kitchen where the jurymen are assembled, and leads them into the study to view the body.

This ceremony over, the coroner and jury return to the kitchen, and the inquiry is opened in due form.

Dr. Johns summonses Nancy Vian, who gives her evidence with tolerable firmness. The coroner explains to the jury that Miss Marian Carlyon can add nothing of any importance to the servant's testimony, and says that, although he will call her at once, if the Jury require it, he hopes they will think fit to spare her the very trying ordeal. The Jury, after a brief consultation, consent —not without reluctance, it must be ad-

mitted—to waive the attendance of Miss Carlyon.

"Then, gentlemen, the only further evidence I have to place before you is medical evidence. As I was the late Mr. Carlyon's physician"—Johns is not a physician, but before using the term he has looked round the room to see that none of his brother practitioners are present—"I am the only person in a position to tell you with any degree of certainty what his health and habit of body was."

Thereupon the doctor gives a description of George Carlyon's constitution, and the failing, which had, as the doctor hinted, led to his death, with a great deal of professional slang and lots of hard words, at which the Jury wagged their heads sagely, and said, "Ah, what a 'stonishin' clever chap yon doctor be, to be sure."

As his not very lucid explanation of the dead man's symptoms left the jury in a fog, of which they did not feel inclined to admit the existence, there was a slight pause.

"If there is any explanation, gentlemen, which I can afford, I shall be most happy to do so," says the coroner.

"Well, then, ax mun!" says one juryman

to his neighbour, who has been carrying on a whispered controversy with him for the last minute or so. His neighbour thus exhorted, looks at Johns, grins all across his face, and says,

"Look'ee here, then, Muster Coroner, can 'ee tell I what's the defference atween 'nat'ral causes' and 'vesitation of God.' I should loike to know before we begin decidin' on the merits of the ca'ase."

"Well," says the doctor, leaning back in his chair, and gazing at the ceiling in order to collect his soaring thoughts. "Well, the difference is this. You see, if anybody dies and you are called to hold an inquest, and there is no particular reason why he should not have died, why that is 'natural causes.' But if anybody dies, and it appears to you on the inquest that there is no reason in particular why he should die, that is 'visitation of God.' Do you understand my explanation?"

"Aw, yes!" answers the querist. But he does not understand it nevertheless, and small blame to him, for if ever there were an instance of distinction without a difference it was the doctor's explanation of the two verdicts.

"Then I'm thinkin', gen'l'men," says Mr.

Lusky, glancing round the table, "after the evidence as we have a-heard we ca'ant do no better than say what we settled afore the inquest, eh?"

The other jurymen nod assent.

"Well, coroner, we gives it 'Visitation o' God' then, and I don't think as there's anything as we can add"—and he glances once more round the table.

"Mightn't us say as we hope as precautions ull be taken for to guard against the sa'am in futur; we used always to put that on in minin' accidents down west—and this here was quite as onexpected?" asks a farmer at the further end of the table, a recent arrival in the neighbourhood.

But his suggestion is promptly negatived, and Dr. Johns receives the verdict, and then pays the jurymen for their attendance. Whereupon they adjourn to the "Cock and Spurs," at Merrimeet, where they promptly expend the small remuneration in glasses of gin and water, or cider.

The doctor has an interview with Marian before he leaves the house, and tells her what the inquest has resulted in. Then he mounts his pony, and goes off to see a patient in the neighbourhood, who is not in

ill-health, but is very glad to see the doctor, and stand him some grog while he tells him all about Carlyon.

In the evening the Coroner returns home in a very comfortable mood, and proceeds to make up his books—no very easy task under the circumstances, for he has to shut one eye in order to get a fair sight of the figures. First of all, he charges for a visit to the patient he called on, as I have just stated. Then he charges mileage, in his capacity as coroner, from his house to Polvrehan and back. Then he charges a guinea for medical evidence. He wishes he could charge two for a *post mortem*, but Marian was so very much opposed to the idea, and so begged him to dispense with the examination, that he had been obliged to consent to her wish. To make matters square, however, he enters an additional guinea against Carlyon in the bill, which he makes out with the intention of sending it in after the funeral is over. Finally, he toddles down to the Bell, where he spends a very jolly night, and whence he returns home, like a cutter beating up the wind, with a multiplicity of tacks, and not always steering as well as he might.

It must have been very edifying to hear

him as the Bell interrupting you his sorrow that your Darwin would think so—"it was that that killed him, poor devil. Here, Charles, bring me another six of Plymouth gin."

He lived his drop till Dr. Johns, and was a most amusing fellow in his cups. We want a little entertaining after all the sad story of last chapter, so I'll venture on a short anecdote.

The lecturer had spent the evening at a patient's some eight miles or so from his own house, and was returning on his pony, in a very happy frame of mind, when his hat was blown off. He got down and recovered his headgear, and while doing so became impressed with the notion that he had some one with him. Whether it was that he was suffering from a sort of double inner vision, and was conscious of himself twice over, or whether he took a post or the pony for a companion, I cannot tell, but he said with much generosity, "Very well, ole f'ler, we'll ride and tie."

Now the custom of "ride and tie" in Cornwall—I don't know if it exists elsewhere, or if so, whether the method is the same—may be thus described. Two men

and one horse are to start from a certain point. One man mounts and rides forward to a predetermined place, dismounts, ties up the horse, and walks on. His friend follows on foot, comes up presently to the tethered nag, looses it, mounts, rides on, overtakes and passes his friend, going on for another prearranged stage, at the end of which he in turn dismounts and leaves the steed tied up. In short, each traveller makes his journey in a continuous sandwich of alternate equestrian and pedestrian exercise.

The doctor then, as I said, observed to his imaginary companion, "Very well, ole f'ler, we'll ride and tie!" and thereupon he tied his pony up to the gate and walked home!

If the doctor spent the evening after the inquest pleasantly, I have no doubt the jurymen did the same. The day was a broken one, so they most of them settled down either at the inn or at the house of the nearest of them, and made a night of it.

At Polvrehan, however, all was weeping and mourning. Alice was still confined to her room, and was in a weak state, which required constant attention from Nancy. Marian was therefore left to take the head

of affairs. Fortunately this brave woman had the strength and determination to see to all things needful. She made the necessary arrangements for her father's funeral, and having done that requested Captain Cormack to come over and assist her in the superintendence of her father's affairs.

The Captain was just a little nervous about this interview. There were several revelations to be made which it would be rather difficult to put into words. But his hesitation was not from any delicate regard for Marian's feelings or the memory of the dead. All he was anxious about was his own position. For a long time he fenced with Marian, although she did not find it out. But at last he was brought to the point—quite unconsciously on her part however.

"Perhaps, all things considered, Captain Cormack, it will be better for my sister and myself to part with our share in the works."

"Your father has left no will?"

"No. He has always said that he entertained a horror of doing so—it was like signing one's death warrant he thought. But, under any circumstances, the property would come to us. We are his only living relations."

"You do not know, I presume, what his property is worth?"

"You must know, better than I do, the value of his share in the business."

"My dear Miss Carlyon, it cuts me to the heart to say so, but you must not count upon that——"

"What do you mean, Captain Cormack?"

"In consideration of very heavy advances —in fact, for the use of all the profits accruing to the firm—he gave me his share as security; and the loan has not been repaid."

"Good Heavens! I had no notion of this. However, Polvrehan, dear old Polvrehan, at least, is ours."

"I fear not. It is very cruel to have to tell you all this, but it is better that you should be undeceived. Polvrehan is very heavily mortgaged——"

"To whom?"

"To me. Your late father was indebted to me in very large sums indeed, Miss Carlyon. He appropriated, on the understanding I have mentioned, all the profits arising from the business. He borrowed money from me on the house and lands—in fact he sold me the moors—and the advances I have made have so far crippled me,

[illegible] as we can.

[illegible]al is compelled to exert all the [illegible]hair over the property to enable [illegible] bankruptcy."

"[illegible]al this money; what can he have [illegible]? We lived comfortably, but [illegible]. What has become of it [illegible]?"

"He speculated in mines, as you are per-[illegible]."

"[illegible] more."

"Oh, that was so silly——"

"Pardon me, I have reason to know that [illegible] for several years past been specula-[illegible]—and unfortunately losing—largely in [illegible]."

"You knew this, and did not stop it, Captain Cormack?"

"How could I?"

"This is terrible indeed. Poor Alic[illegible] what will she do without her home comfor[illegible] I don't care for myself; I am well [illegible] strong, but she is too weak to have to [illegible] her way in the world. To think of [illegible] papa speculating in that mad way: b[illegible] I know was so strongly opposed t[illegible] gambling, as he used to call it. [illegible] remember, Captain Cormack, that w[illegible] about to come into partner[illegible] [illegible]d to pay him some portio[illegible]

money in shares. He told me so, and said he hoped that would not part you, for he liked you very much, but he would not dabble in the mines."

"He consented to take them, however. Indeed, we could not have come to terms otherwise, for I had no money to give him."

Marian looked up at him sharply.

"You had no money?—and yet within so short a time after entering the business you are able to advance him large sums, and in short, buy him out. *You* must have been speculating in mines too, I think, Captain Cormack, but with better success than my father."

Cormack turned a sort of sickly salmon-colour. It was the nearest approach he could make to a blush. He felt he had made a mistake somehow, and that Marian had got him into a corner. But, like a rat under the same circumstances, he was obliged to be courageous and show his teeth.

"No, Miss Carlyon. I never speculated in mines after I had joined the firm. *I* did not risk the prosperity of the business by gambling."

"Nor did my father, sir, until you became

[illegible] discovered some thing more than my father's folly as you so [illegible] said it. It is strange that I could not see this before. I think we had better bring this interview to a close. In future we can communicate by letter. I must consult my father's solicitor about these mortgages and purchases and loans. It seems to me that the sudden affluence of a partner who had hardly enough money to purchase a share in the business, and the equally sudden poverty of my father, who had been the prosperous proprietor of the business, are things that will require—but may not bear—a little [illegible] scrutiny."

[illegible] was no coward in this case. He was a [illegible] rascal, and as fierce as a [illegible] in [illegible]. He bowed.

"[illegible] Mr. [illegible]. But I would

I will not be the only one concerned. If candid investigations are to be the order of the day, I had better at once call on Dr. Johns to reconsider his verdict by the light of the additional evidence I can assist him to." He took the little phial from his pocket. Marian trembled. She felt that she could not cope with this man. He was too unscrupulous and cunning. She sank into a chair.

"Fatherless — motherless — friendless!" she murmured.

Cormack saw her consternation, and triumphed.

"Come, Miss Carlyon. You will think better of this. You had better not attempt to coerce me. A system of annoyance cannot injure my title, and it would be simply suicidal in you to adopt it. I suppose," he added, with a sardonic grin, "the mania does not run in the blood," and he touched the breast-pocket of his coat where the phial was.

Marian did not answer him. She rose from her seat with an effort, and walked towards the door. He intercepted her.

"You see it is no use your trying to quarrel with me. I think we shall understand each other better after this. I mean

a mere chance shot, fired from a sinking ship. She was goaded to it by his treatment. But the shot told. Cormack turned even whiter than was his natural complexion (which was white enough in all conscience), and was staggered for a second or so, during which Marian slipped out of the room.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BARON OF LACQUOIGNE.

THERE is not an older barony in the long and distinguished roll of English nobility than that of Lacquoigne. The family came over with the Conqueror—the name is evidently Norman—and has furnished many an ornament to the Church, the Upper House, the Army, and the Bench.

Unfortunately, at intervals in the long line of Lords of Lacquoigne, there occurred thriftless and useless individuals who undid all the good which the wiser heirs had done for the family, and lavished the money they had taken pains to accumulate for the title; for the family had never been a wealthy one. In its early days it had found occasion to draw more Jews' teeth than almost any other noble line. In more civilised times it had been compelled to obtain money by less questionable and less expeditious means.

The last lord had been a great director of public companies. The present nobleman dealt largely in rabbits. Another scion of the house had driven a profitable bargain with a railway, which was to run through a portion of the property; another had, in times before the Reform Bill, let the representation of a borough adjoining the Lacquoigne estates on very advantageous terms. As a rule they were shrewd men these Lords of Lacquoigne, and had a good eye for any scheme that would bring in money. If they could have gone into business, they would have become enormously wealthy. But the idea of connecting trade and title was too mad a one to be entertained for a moment. It is true one very wild son of the house, who cheerfully cleared himself of encumbrances by becoming bankrupt, had passed for a brief period as a horse-dealer; but of course that was a masquerade for a legal purpose. Those confounded tradesmen had bothered him so, that he paid them in their own coin — beat them with their own weapons. Deprived, by the disgusting spread of civilisation and humanity, of his hereditary right to plunge his creditors into "the darkest donjon under the castle moat"

until they signed receipts in full, he had no other alternative than this.

The family estates, in a lovely nook of Somersetshire, were not very large. The house was a fine old place, but terribly ramshackle and out of repair. People went over from Axeford to inspect Beaudechet, described in the local guide-books as "the ancestral and baronial residential mansion of the illustrious line of Barons of Lacquoigne, known to have been in their possession from time immemorial, or even a prior date."

The visitors after going over it, would shake their heads at its ruinous state, and say what a pity it was that so fine a family should be so poor. Why did the family, then, let these scouts see the nakedness of the land? Because the fees paid by the excursionists to the servants were considered in their wages. It was very fine of the *Axford Gazette* to speak in such high terms of "the generosity of Lord Lacquoigne in throwing open his magnificent grounds and splendid mansion to the public;" but the editor and proprietor must have been well aware of the little arrangement by which his lordship eked out his housekeeper's salary. Did not he himself send a copy of his paper

to Beaudechet weekly, and agree to accept payment in rabbits, and a day's shooting in the season?

Is it not painful, all this? Picture the descendant of goodness knows how many barons chaffering for a penny paper, or permitting gaping yokels to pay his servants' wages. Fancy him slinking through the little town, half afraid to look the people he meets in the face, because the odds are that he owes them money. What miserable pinching and paring, what petty economy, what pinchbeck display, what albata splendour had not this poor lord to put up with! Would it not have been better for him to go out to stern labour in a fustian jacket, bought for ready money at a slop-shop, than to roll through the streets of the little town in a chariot that he could not afford to have repainted, with a coachman and footman to whom he owed money, and wearing a coat that he had not paid for, though the tailor had dunned him for the money?

Poor fellow! it wasn't his fault that he could not work honestly instead of living this miserable life. We must remember that every rank of life has its duties, and the duty of a nobleman is to do nothing and

spend money. We can scarcely wonder if, with such a difficult duty to perform, this poor nobleman grew hard, and callous, and cruel. An artificial society makes its creatures artificial—machines without hearts, without tears, without blood.

Was it strange that the noble lord was so severe with poachers when he sat on the bench at Axeford? Every bird, every rabbit, that the poacher took from him represented the shillings this peer so sorely needed. They were the wares of his shop that the poacher filched, and no one is surprised when the tradesman punishes the thief who steals his goods. Was it strange that the noble lord was so exacting about his rents, and sold up the wretched tenants who were a little behindhand with their payments? The world exacted its rent from him. He must go to town for the season, he must ask friends down into the country, he must give dinners, and subscribe to charities, and keep up appearances. These were his rent, and he had to be particular and punctual, and those who were his tenants must be the same. For cruelty and meanness of every description, there seems to me considerable excuse in this

paltry false position of the descendant of blue-blood barons.

As his lordship sat among his guests in the banquet hall at Beaudechet, and helped them to neck of mutton or home-fed pork, his friends could not but hear the howl of the wolves which he found it so difficult to keep from the door. But they were polite, and chose to believe that the noise came from his lordship's kennels. And if some excuse is to be made for him, how much credit is there not due to his friends! They kept up the fallacy of his nobility in this house of his, where everything that surrounded them spoke plainly of indigence, impecuniosity, and ignominy.

Behind the faded tapestry half-starved rats held audible debate on the advantage of being well-born, as compared with the disadvantage of being ill-fed. Dusty suits of armour, with the strangely obstrusive air of being out at elbows, adorned the corridors, whose dim windows looked out with lack-lustre gaze on the leaf-strewn park, where so many noble elms had fallen to prop the falling fortune of the house. Grave pictures of Lacquoignes, in the costumes of all periods, from the very earliest, but all

with the indubitable Lacquoigne expression, discernible in spite of the changes of dress, looked down from the walls with a melancholy kind of prescience of certain ultimate exile. A few even seemed to regard fixedly some point in their frames, as if they already saw the dreadful label, "Lot 108," affixed there.

The very plate—the ancestral plate—on the buffet in the banqueting hall had a strange look. It seemed as if it did not belong to the place, but was only paying a visit. And, indeed, when the family went to town it was packed up and travelled with them. And perhaps Mr. Attenborough could tell you that a Mr. Lacking, who was very like my lord's butler, at such times deposited with him—for safety of course, but naturally taking a little security in the shape of money—a number of massive pieces of plate, marked with the crest of an open hand, coined. And sometimes when, at the end of the season, Mr. Lacking did not get money enough to restore Mr. Attenborough's security, the Lacquoignes did not happen to ask any friends down to stay, and the buffet at Beaudecher remained undecorated.

Darkly brooded the sombre carved oaken

roofs of Beaudechet over the worn furniture and faded hangings—nay, the very walls seemed touched with grief, and mourned over the poverty of the line, breaking into blotches of unseemly moisture, as if they were weeping.

But if the furniture was worm-riddled, the carpets threadbare, the curtains moth-eaten, and chairs and tables scanty, one saw brightly stained in the pictured panes, or ostentatiously displayed on beam and portal, and in every conceivable available spot, the arms of the illustrious house of Lacquoigne—argent, over a drop of dew, a kite volant, with proper supporters; two geese, vert, billed of the first. Crest, an open hand, couped, gules. Motto: "Droict d'aynesse, rang non richesse."

There was no doubt about it, at the time when my story begins, that the fortunes of the house were at a very low ebb indeed. The late lord, as I have said, had to do with a great many public companies. But making a fairish profit by his directorial duties, he was foolish enough to invest some of his money in a company's shares. This was almost criminally foolish, because he had been a director often enough and long

enough to know better. In the end he not only lost what he had invested, but more beside, and, in fact, only kept the bailiffs out of Beaudechet by a barricade of felled timber. The present lord was suffering from this. And what was worse, he had a family of six, and had married a lady, who, though nobly born, was not at all wealthy. Each had supposed the other to be well-off, and the error was not discovered till too late, when they both solemnly registered a vow that in case of anything happening to either, the survivor would not make such a mistake again. But there was no help for it. They pinched, and pared, and screwed in every possible way, and made the two ends apparently meet, maintaining all the while an outward calm such as is expected of nobility.

Two footmen waiting at table to remove a silver cover from a couple of mutton chops; a chariot and pair taking her ladyship down to a shop in Newington Causeway to buy cheap calicoes; a Baron doing second gamekeeper's work, and shooting rabbits to sell them to a London poulterer—these are some of the illuminations to be drawn in the margin of the chronicles of the Lacquoignes at this period.

But at last there came a gleam of good luck. My lord is reading the *Times*, which he takes in for an hour a day from the little newswoman round the corner. That little newswoman does not like to remind the Baron of his bill, but she says "it's a pity great folks think so little about money, or they would not leave her unpaid so long."

As he glances down the columns of the journal, his eye catches a paragraph, headed "Election Intelligence." The seat for Axeford has just been vacated, the late M.P. retiring through ill-health; and his lordship fancies the paragraph may refer to that. He looks at it with idle curiosity, for he has long ceased to care about politics, and takes no active part in the elections at Axeford—has not done so since Mr. Thorn, the Radical linendraper, succeeded in getting in a candidate, to whom his lordship was opposed.

But the paragraph is not about Axeford. It is to the effect that there has been a split among the good people of Brybemhall, and they are going to petition against the return of the sitting member, Mr. Orr, whom they accuse of corruption and other terrible charges never before dreamed of in that pure constituency.

A brilliant prospect suddenly seems to open before Lord Lacquoigne's eyes. Here is a candidate, and Axeford is a vacancy. He takes it for granted that Mr. Orr will either resign or be unseated, and he calculates on the stroke he could make by returning him for what he can easily make appear as the family seat of the Lacquoignes. Once having secured him the seat, his lordship feels that he can command the gratitude of Mr. Orr, whom he knows well by reputation, and who, he feels satisfied, can afford to throw his gratitude into a solid form.

So my lord rings the bell, and sends up word to my lady, who is dressing for dinner, that he wishes to speak to her; whereupon she tells him that she is waiting him in her dressing-room.

"How long can the dinner wait, my lady?"

"Any time you please; but had not you better wait? What are your wishes?"

"I see Mr. Orr, the wealthy banker of Lombard Street, is likely to lose his seat for Blybomhall. There's a vacancy, as you know, at Axeford, and he is a very desirable man to [illegible] Lacquoigne candidate. I

want to go up to town at once, and see Scrooby."

Scrooby is my lord's lawyer. My lady sees the beauty of the plan at a glance; so she steps into her room, and tells Martin, her maid, to go down and tell cook to delay the dinner. In obedience to orders, the cook refrains from cooking the three chops, and puts the pot of potatoes on the hob.

My lord takes a Hansom, and goes straight off to see Scrooby.

Scrooby is a very well-to-do lawyer, and he undertakes my lord's affairs chiefly because it enables him to keep a tin box, with the Baron's title emblazoned on it, in the consulting room. He is, among other things, a Parliamentary agent, and he knows Mr. Orr; so that matters are pretty smooth. He promises to communicate at once with Mr. Orr. He quite agrees that that gentleman is not likely to face the petition, and that Axeford will be a graceful way of getting out of it.

Why prolong the story? Mr. Scrooby points out to Mr. Orr that here is the honourable extrication from his trouble, which, truth to tell, is bothering the banker terribly.

"You can, sir, retire in disgust, and shake the dust off your shoes at the recalcitrant borough. You are invited by a large and influential deputation to represent Axeford, which has long watched with jealous eyes your career as representative of Brybemhall."

"I shall of course be put at once on a familiar footing with Lord Lacquoigne"—the Dives of yesterday was dying to shake hands with Lord Lazarus. Dives knew my lord's poverty, but then he was of such splendid descent, and moved in such a very select circle! That select circle was Mr. Orr's aim and ambition; he had never yet been admitted to it. Money in England can buy everything but the *entrée* into those charmed rings where only the best blood circulates. Yet even this Lord Lacquoigne would have to contrive for his benefactor; and Scrooby knew he would, so he made the undertaking.

In a few days the whole affair was settled. Lord Lacquoigne went down to Axeford, and entered into communication with Mr. Payham, the chief political agent of the borough. The tradesmen, who were all interested in his lordship's good fortune, because they had, so to speak, invested largely in him, were most anxious for the return of Mr. Orr. A

lengthily-signed requisition was forwarded to Lombard Street, and his lordship's creditors began to dream of being paid some day. The borough was his—he had purchased it with bad debts!

Meanwhile Mr. Orr—or somebody for him—wrote a parting address to the unworthy electors of Brybemhall. "After the suspicions which had been breathed against him, he should not feel happy in retaining his seat, for he could not believe he retained their confidence. With regard to the abominable charge which malicious persons had trumped up against him, he could say, with his hand on his heart, that his dearest wish was to see the inquiry prosecuted to the utmost: and, in order to ensure that desirable consummation, he was prepared to advance the sum requisite to open the proceedings."

You see he took things with a high hand, did Mr. Orr, and very wisely. As soon as his determination to throw up the representation of Brybemhall became known in that borough, a cloud seemed to fall upon it. The electors felt like wilful heirs who have foolishly alienated the affections of a wealthy relative. They quarrelled among themselves; and from that day forth there was no more peace or

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brotherly unity in Brybemhall, for each man accused his neighbour of assisting to kill the goose that laid golden eggs.

On the 5th of November, 1854, the unopposed election of Mr. Orr as M.P. for the ancient and incorruptible borough of Axeford, was declared by his Worship the Mayor, who thereby felt he had secured the settlement of his little account with Lord Lacquoigne. Every man in the crowd felt as he cheered the newly-chosen representative that he was giving a certain discount in consideration of receiving ready money shortly from Beaudechet.

As he bowed to his constituents, Mr. Orr said to himself, "Now I shall be an invited guest at his lordship's, and get into the best society. But I wonder what he expects!"

As Lord Lacquoigne rode home in the unpaid-for chariot, with the creditor groom and footman, he sank back very wearily in his seat, and said to himself, "I suppose it's all right now. I wonder how I can work him. I must open an account with him, and he must let me overdraw, for one thing. I wonder what family he has. Our girls are too young to marry: but if he has a daughter, we may get a match for Harry!"

Mr. Orr was certainly a catch for a needy lord. He had all but the one nice shade which money could not buy, and that nice shade would be filled in by a union of the families.

What was "Harry"—his lordship's son and heir—doing at the moment when his fond father cut and dried this little scheme for his happiness?

CHAPTER X.

"PLEASE TO REMEMBER."

THAT the 5th of November, eighteen hundred and fifty-four, was perhaps a gloomy morning in England, where we most of us were at the time, we can all believe. That it was a very gloomy morning in a distant part of Europe, where few of us were on that day, we, every one of us, know. And why? Because it is history. As the day struggled through a seemingly unconquerable array of dense dark clouds, so English glory, and the English courage of which it is born, broke steadily through the outnumbering masses which threatened to overwhelm them, and the page of history which should, by all rights, have been darkened with the story of our defeat, is brightly blazoned with the chronicle of our victory.

Dark and dead, dully lapt the mist about

the hills around Sebastopol. In endless grey lakes it stood in the valleys. The plains were one vast sludge, with little dim dun pools of water collected here and there—dun now, but to take a more ghastly colour shortly, as that mud was by-and-by to be poached into gory ooze.

There had been dull muffled rumblings in that plain all through the night, rumblings which young soldiers listened to with awe, and believed to be the portents of a convulsion of nature, but which old soldiers recognized as warnings of coming battle. Like thieves in the darkness, the stolid Russian gunners were rolling the cannon, with wheels bound with haybands, into their position along the Woronzoff road. Those pieces of artillery were destined to take up their position on the heights just discernible in the fog, and thence sweep the encampment of the allies, while the vast flood of Russian troops poured down like a dark inundation on the plateau, and swallowed up the scattered divisions of the English and French armies.

When the daylight began to struggle dimly with the night and the mist, those fine fellows, Dick, Tom, and Harry, the out-

posts, who had fought so many times li
Homeric heroes to drive back the rem
nissances which the enemy made so ofte
in force upon this particular point, ju
nearly the end of the preceding month.
Dick, Tom, and Harry, I say, became awa
of a certain thickness in the fog in front
them, which rapidly growing blacker a
blacker, developed itself into a line of pre
ssed Russians advancing at a run. Figh
ing all the way with a determined fur
that kept even so numerous an enemy at
respectful distance, the advanced posts r
tired. They fell back behind the crest
the hill upon our encampment.

And no sooner was that crest abandon
by our brave fellows, going back step
step, and holding at bay so overwhelming
force, than up rolled and rattled the enemy
guns of position and field artillery, and beg
to pour in a great furious sheet of flame, a
shot and shell, upon the scarcely awaken
camp. Under a canopy of smoke that hu
chokingly and immoveably in the heavy fi
with the shot roaring and whistling throu
the tents, ploughing up the earth, our m
woke out of dreams of home,—and who kno
what pleasant things beside?—to stumble o

and hurry forth to what might be their first and last battle.

What a rushing to and fro of excited officers, what a scampering of scarcely dressed soldiers, what a hurrying up of horses, what mounting and galloping in haste! And over all that deadly pall of fog and smoke, that shriek of shells, that hoarse hurricane of shot!

Captain the Honourable Henry Vorian, son and heir of Lord Lacquoigne, turned out with the rest and joined his regiment, the 5th battalion of the Scots Fusiliers.

You see a cadet of that noble house could only enter the Guards. No line regiment could give sufficient scope for the splendour and the chivalry of that distinguished line. But as, unfortunately, a commission in the Guards is an expensive pastime generally speaking, instead of a profitable employment, the son of the lofty but impecunious race was most unfairly situated. He was a fine fellow, and stood quite six feet in his stockings, but he was up to his lofty neck in debt, and had no chance of getting out of it.

You will scarcely be surprised, then, to hear that the Honourable Henry Vorian's slumbers had been beset with dreams of

unfortunate tradesmen. In a vision, h found himself in his quarters in Londo reclining on the sofa. "Tap!" came at th door. It was a dunning, a dolorous knoc and he declined to notice it. "Rap!" y louder; "bang!"—"crash!"—"boom!" was the Russian battery opening on the cam

"There they are, sir," shouts Harry servant, thrusting his head into the tent.

"Who?" asks the Captain, hardly awak

"The Rooshians—the divvles, in big foorc bedad, and with moighty big guns to th fore——" and, as he says it, a round sho bowling along, cuts him in half. The bleed ing trunk falls forward into Harry Vorian hut, and speaks more eloquently than any thing else could do of the actual imminer presence of battle.

The heir of Lord Lacquoigne was a carefu man at his toilet, for he was handsome an a lady killer, but he did not waste muc time in beautifying now. In five minutes h joined his regiment.

By this time the battle had begun i earnest. Under the cold grey sky the masse of the enemy came rolling onward upon th front of our lines.

Experienced officers say that there has never been so important and so fiercely contested a battle as Inkermann—for that, as I hope my readers have guessed, is the battle I am trying to tell them of—which was so easy to understand as this. The guns brought so stealthily along the Woronzoff road were to be placed on the ground occupied by our outposts, which were to be driven in by the onslaught of an outnumbering force of infantry—there was no play for brilliant cavalry manœuvres here. Only stern clink of bayonet to bayonet, or rattling volley upon volley of small arms, hand to hand encounter, and the stern silent grapple of life for life, could decide this contest. And then when the guns had taken position on the desired ridge, a storm of iron was to be hurled on the weak point of the position, so as to shake or shatter the troops pushed forward for its defence. And when that shaking or shattering was accomplished, there remained nothing to be done but to let loose the whole immense Russian army on the level plateau, where our encampments lay, and destroy in detail the scattered corps of the allied forces.

Let us see how far the Russians succeeded in their attack.

They drove in our advanced guard. They [illegible] their guns. They marched up the [illegible] where our men were [illegible] sleeping [illegible] I will not [illegible] under the French [illegible] of [illegible] because I [illegible] Englishman—or Englishwoman [illegible] only [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

every detail of the scheme which was to make conquest a certainty, they nevertheless found it slipping from their hands.

What did it matter to any private in any regiment that the science of war pronounced him beaten? What was it that that devouring fire, which made such lanes through the ranks of his comrades, told him, but that he must fight for six men instead of one?

And every single soldier on the heights of Inkermann did fight for six men. Outmatched, surprised, eaten out by the searching torrent of shot and shell, our gallant army held its own. Held its own! Why use so weak a word?—beat back, cut in pieces, scattered like a cloud all the outpoured bravery of Russia. And at last in a valley choked with the dead and dying, where almost every step was set upon the corpse of a brave man, after nine long hours of a fasting resistance, famished and faint—but famous until History shall shut up her book, and Glory burn her laurels—our brave men sank down to rest—victors in a dearly-bought contest.

Early in the engagement, coming up in companies as they could be formed, the

brigade of Guards, the picked men of England, went to the front. We who have seed them on parade, to whom they are most familiar, cannot but feel a sort of choking of breath as we see them plunge into that deadly canopy. The flower of our land, officered by the young nobility of the country—they are lost, company after company, in the reeling smoke that is lighted up every instant by the lashing red-hot torrent of iron death.

There is a battery on the verge of the slope opposite The Ruins—a hasty structure of gabions and sandbags, thrown up to hold two guns, which silenced a battery on the opposite heights, and were withdrawn after doing their work. Into this battery the Guards throw themselves, for a large body of Russians is sweeping round the edge of the cliff—a dark tide creeping out with a glittering spray of bayonets—and presently to break into a long rolling volley of fire.

The battalion of Fusiliers to which the Honourable Henry Vorian is attached extends on the left of the battery. There is no fear in the lad's heart as he unsheathes his maiden sword and looks steadily at the advancing foe. He thinks of his stately

mother at home, of the careworn face of his father, of old school-days and school-mates, of the pleasant park of Beaudechet.

And then further down the line there is the clink of engaging bayonets. In another moment the fight has rushed up to where he is, and he is cheering on his men, and busy, cut and parry, with a youngster about his own age, who is leading the Russians.

Two lads! One would have liked to see them playing a match at billiards, or sculling for prizes, or boxing to prove best men—but crossing swords, thirsting for each other's blood! War may be very noble, and I own that when I am speaking of it in a broad way, describing the onset of army upon army, it makes my blood gallop—but when one thinks of such individual encounters it chills the healthy pulses, and makes one shudder.

There was no long contest between these two lads. Neither knew much of the art of killing. They slashed viciously, and parried vigorously, and a skilled swordsman would have finished either of them in two seconds. But a dogged, dark, beetle-browed private, in Captain Mustakof's regiment, seeing his young officer did not kill off his man at

once, made a sturdy thrust at the youn Englishman's breast. But before tl bayonet reached him, Captain Vorian wa lying flat on his back, with his eyes fixe on vacancy, and his arm shattered at tl shoulder.

A spent shot bounding up the slope ha bowled him over. His young enemy, almo carried forward by the weight of a ferocio cut he was making in seven, ran on tl bayonet of Private McDonald, who, seein his officer beset by odds, was coming up t support him, and plunged his weapon in the Russian officer's throat; whereupon l and the Russian private came to suc close quarters, that neither could use h bayonet. So they fastened a grip and wer down on the top of the two boys, trying f grim death to throttle each other.

And, to judge from their earnestness an determination, they might have gone o trying to throttle each other to this day, ha not another cannon ball, coming with ea bounds up the slope, knocked them bo into space.

In the meantime the Guards had foug desperately. Long after their ammunitio was exhausted, when half their number we

writhing on the ground with mortal wounds, or lying stark and stiff, deaf to the roar of battle around and above them, the Guards held the battery. Driven out of it for a while, they retired to the crest, and as soon as reinforced, struggled back again, and retook the position.

It was lucky for Captain the Honourable Henry Vorian, of the 5th Battalion of the Scots Fusilier Guards, that the Russian officer was killed over him. The Russian soldiery, enraged by defeat, brutalised by training, stimulated by vile spirit, bayoneted the wounded English as they lay. One amiable ruffian did pin him by the leg as he rushed on into the battery, but the wound was not dangerous, and by-and-by, when the returning Guards tumbled the enemy head over heels out of the position, Captain Vorian was taken up by two privates, and carried to the rear in a blanket.

"You're lucky, old boy," said a brother officer, as he passed him. "They bayoneted poor Newman, —— them!" and I trust that the imprecation was forgiven, in consideration of the hideous barbarity which called it forth.

"There's life in the old dog yet," said the

cheery voice of the surgeon, as he examine Vorian's wounds.

"Have you ever been walked over wit thick boots?" asked Vorian, smiling faint as the doctor took the brandy flask from h lips.

"No, I can't say I have."

"Well, then, you don't know whether it fatal; but, egad, it hurts me more than tl smash."

After which pleasantry Captain Voria bid the world good afternoon for a sho space, but recovered anon, to find himse laid on a hospital bed, with a smart pa in the calf of his leg, and a dull aching i his shoulder. He could not help feelin that for some time at least he had seen h share of the campaign.

"How did it go," he asked in a low voic of an orderly who came by.

"What was it, sir?"

"The scrimmage on the 5th."

"Beat 'em back, sir, of course. But w have lost a lot of men."

"Have the Guards suffered much?"

"Yes, sir. Heavy losses in the Guard But they cut the best figure of all tl regiments engaged."

"Thank God!"

With which pious ejaculation the young officer dozed off again.

And just about the time when this refreshing sleep crept over him, his father, Lord Lacquoigne, had just finished a letter, inviting Mr. and Mrs. Orr down to spend the Christmas among their constituents.

CHAPTER XI.

FAREWELL TO POLVREHAN.

WHEN Marian escaped from Captain Cormack, she fled to her own room, locked the door, and gave way to a hysterical flood of tears. Hitherto she had borne up against her trouble, and for the sake of her sister and of her father's memory, had endeavoured to wear an outward calm, and face boldly whatever duties were imposed upon her. But now all that fortitude was prostrated by a single blow. They were not only fatherless, but friendless and penniless, and there was nothing before them but to go out and fight their way in the great world, of London.

She flung herself upon her knees beside the little white bed where she had so often lisped her innocent child's prayer, calling with imperfect speech upon God "to bess

dear papa and dear mama;" and there she sought comfort and strength at the Throne of Mercy with heart-broken sobs and choked utterance. And, if not comfort, calm was at length given to her entreaties, and she rose, and sitting on the bedside, began to look before her and try to see the way which she must choose. Alas, the choice was not a very perplexing one. Women have but few kinds of employment open to them. They had fewer, at the time of which I am writing, than they have now, and as Marian considered her prospects, there was but a narrow selection before her. A place behind the counter, needlework, and teaching, were the only three alternatives she could discover, for all her puzzling and thinking.

Of these three modes of earning a livelihood, the last seemed to poor Marian's inexperienced mind by far the most preferable. Indeed, after contemplating it for a short time, she began to picture it as rather pleasant way of getting a living. She would not be so much removed from her original station in life as she would be when serving in a shop, nor would she be so lonely and friendless as she would be if she adopted the

needle. Indeed, she looked forward to something not unlike a home in her position as a governess.

Poor girl! Ignorant of the ways of the world—of the chilly barrier which poverty raises between the governess and her employers—of the dubious position, half servant, yet hardly half companion—of the exactions, the tyrannies, and the hard-heartedness she was fated to meet with in this new career, she almost began to wish it might commence at once.

At any rate it would be better to toil for her bread than to be indebted to Henry Cormack. She would have undertaken any drudgery sooner than be beholden to his charity, and this was—so she flattered herself—by no means unpleasant work. People would not, she argued, entrust their children, the formation of their characters, and their futures to her, unless they had confidence in her and liked her. She would feel rather as if she were among friends than that she was a hired servant, for she felt no wages could pay for such services as a conscientious governess performs. Kindliness, consideration, and friendship are the recompense such a one earns.

She looked forward, too, to much happiness with the little ones who would be entrusted to her care. Oh, Marian! you forgot how children naturally object to information, and are anything but favourably disposed towards their teachers. Even children of a larger growth have the same feeling, for when an author attempts to write "with a purpose"; when he diverges from the beaten track of narrative to moralise or instruct his readers, all say, "Oh, now he's getting prosy," and skip a page or so, until they come to the stirring incidents again. It is a melancholy fact, but it is true nevertheless.

When Marian had dried her eyes and somewhat regained composure, she summoned old Nancy Vian to her aid, and disclosed to her something of what had taken place between her and Captain Cormack.

The old woman was overwhelmed with grief at the news, though it was hardly news to her, for she had long suspected Carlyon of mine-gambling. She saw so much of him in his unguarded moments, that she had gathered some knowledge of his folly, and knew, even, that he had lost heavily at times. But she had never

dreamed of such hopeless ruin, such utter bankruptcy as this.

To her the position of the poor girls did not at first appear in its true colours. To have to work for a living did not seem anything very terrible to the industrious old soul. What overwhelmed her with such bitter grief was the thought that the Carlyons of Carlyon were no more. The family was extinct, and the property was passing into other hands. No ardent Cavalier ever bewailed more earnestly the downfall of the Royal House of Stuart than this poor uneducated creature bemoaned the evil end which had befallen a squireen family. Loyalty is not a virtue that resides only under silken vests and blue ribbons of the garter, or that attaches itself exclusively to the lines of kings.

But when Nancy had spoken her coronach for the Carlyons of Carlyon, she began to consider what was to come of the girls—the daughters of the last of the long-lived race. And then she saw how desolate and unfriended they were, and remembered how hard it is to get on in the world without some kind helping hand at the start, without friendly counsel, without the support to be

derived from the knowledge that eyes are fondly watching our career.

"Aw, my dear, what be ga'en to do wi' yourself and yon poor darlin' lying there, so white as the sheets and so vrail as a lily?"

"We must leave this, Nancy, and I mean to take a governess's place. We shall go to London, and if I can earn enough I will put Miss Alice into some cheap lodging where she might perhaps do a little needlework, or give lessons in music."

"Lodgin's is a braave deal up to Lonnon, my dear, and a governess bean't o'erpaid, I reckon. You'll ne'er be able to do yon, I'm thinking."

"Then, if the worst comes to the worst, she must go out as nursery governess, where she won't have to look after more than one or two little children."

"Eh, my dear, yon Cormack must just lend you a trifle to start wi——"

"Not a farthing!" said Marian, and she told the honest old servant what had passed between them.

I won't attempt to set down the diatribe which Nancy pronounced against the junior partner of the firm. However, she agreed

with Marian that for the sake of the dead the wrong must be borne in silence.

"You remember, too, Nancy, that Miss Alice knows nothing about—about that bottle, the poi—the laudanum, so she must know nothing of this difference with Mr. Cormack."

"Aw, my dear, ne'er let yon sweet girl go on thinking well of the civil-speaking, black-hearted rogue. He's sweetened his tongue fine enough, surely, when he have a-spoke to she, and there's no knowin' what might come of it. She might fall in love wi' his carneying ways and his soft deceiving voice, my dear. You'm best to tell her."

"I shall, of course, tell her that I have reason to think he has behaved ill, and warn her against him; but it is of little consequence one way or the other, as we are going to leave here almost immediately. And it would never do to tell her how he has treated me, or she would ask why I submit to it—and then that secret, which, please God, I will keep from her as long as I live, would have to be told to her."

"You'm right, my dear—you'm right. But take care and warn her, poor darlin', for if ever there was a smooth-tongued

villain as goes about for to teal traps for young girls' affections, that man is him, I'm thinking. Lor bless you, haven't I a-seed 'un car'in on wi' Miss Alice a'most from the first minute as he came, on'y I thought as 'twas only like to be a further increase of the partnership of the firm, so I took no notice."

"We must get away from here with all the speed we can, Nancy."

"So soon as the poor dear can be moved. But where be e'e goin'?"

"To London, Nancy."

"Aw, yes, my dear, but yon's a mighty big pla'ace, I'm told—most as big's Cornwall, I reckon. I mean where 'bouts in Lonnon, my dear."

"Ah, that I can't tell."

"Harken to me, my dear, then. My sister's husband down to Penzance he have a sister up to Lonnon, and she do let lodgin's I do know, for pa'ason over to Merrimeet he lodged there when a went up vor to see the Gra'at Exhibition. I'll find out where 'tis to, and I'll write to my sister and tell her to write to she, and you can go there, and I'm bound she'll make you bra'ave and comf'table, my dear."

"Kind, thoughtful Nancy! always so good to me from the earliest time I can remember," said Marian, kissing the old woman's withered cheek.

So it was determined that Nancy should write and make these arrangements for the girls. And I can tell you it was not for everybody that Nancy would have undertaken the awful task of penning an epistle. A long and laborious task it was, with much smudging and many blots, and everlasting difficulties in orthography. But it was accomplished at last, and Nancy's sister, having, with almost equal difficulty, first deciphered it, and secondly, made out its meaning (two very different things), wrote a reply, giving the required address, and enclosing a missive for her sister-in-law, Mrs. Bartlett, who resided in Pratt Street, Camden Town—so the address stated—and who let lodgings for single gentlemen, but would, as Nancy's sister thought, "be glad four two let the Missis Carlynes have a rum or two verry reesnuble, and doo all she cud four them in considarashun of them abeein Cornish, and frends of hern and Nance's."

Now that their future course was decided on, Marian was only too anxious to get

away from Polvrehan. She longed for Alice's recovery, and almost worked herself into an illness too, so much did she fret at the delay.

Dr. Johns came every day to see Alice, but luckily his visits did not delay her recovery, for Nancy did not administer the physic he sent. She had no belief in the doctor, and was a culler of simples and herbalist herself, and prescribed for Alice some concoction, which if, like Dr. Johns' draughts, it did no good, was less likely to do harm than they were.

Nature, in the meantime, undertook the poor girl's cure. She was young, and though she dearly loved her father, was incapable of any very deep emotion. Her sorrow, like her affection, was demonstrative and excessive to begin with, but was not deeply enough rooted to be very lasting.

Within a few days after her father's funeral, she was able to get about again. Marian at once hastened all preparations for departure. She had arranged not to say anything to Alice until the last moment, and even then only to tell her for the present that they were going to London on business, and for change of air.

In the meantime Nancy kept Captain Cormack at bay. He called day after day to inquire, and was most anxious to see Marian. Nancy used to tell all sorts of stories:—"Miss Alice was not so well, and Miss Marian had not left her bedside all day"—or, "Miss Marian was quite knocked up, and had gone to lie down"—or "Miss Marian had a very bad headache." Sometimes she left him in the hall while she went in to inquire whether he could see Miss Marian, and came back with a fictitious message, making some excuse for Marian's not seeing him. Cormack was not surprised at Marian's declining to receive him, but he persevered, thinking he must some day or other find an opportunity, and believing that time would heal the difference between them. He never suspected Nancy of being in the plot, and used to turn away and walk towards the gate quite unconscious of the threatening gestures and silent defiances the old woman flung after his retreating figure.

The packing was proceeded with all this time very quietly and expeditiously. Marian only took a few treasures from the dear old home she was leaving: a china bowl, in which her father had been christened, her

mother's workbox, and the two portraits of the dear parents she had lost, painted in miniature, and mounted in gold lockets, which used to adorn the drawing-room table. These, with a few books and her stock of clothes, were all that she took. The rest was left to pay, as far as it would, the debts which her father had contracted.

Nancy next engaged the covered cart of a neighbouring farmer to take (as she alleged) her and her boxes to the cross roads to meet the coach to Plymouth.

Everything was arranged to their complete satisfaction, and it was decided that they should go by the morning mail, which would make the hour of their departure early, and so enable them to get off without any notice.

Henry Cormack made his accustomed call on the evening before they left. Nancy told him that Miss Marian was engaged just then —and added, out of sheer mischief, that if he would call the next day, about noon, Miss Marian would be glad to have a word with him. This message, you may be sure, sent him away satisfied.

"I knew she must come round in time, women always do!" said he, as he strode away in a high state of glee.

That night Marian told Alice that they were to start next day for London on business—and in the hope that change of air would benefit her health. She was not to bother about packing, Nancy would see to that.

So, early next morning, the farmer's covered spring-cart drove up to the door, and the boxes were stowed away in it, and then, after a bitter, bitter parting between Marian and Nancy, and when the old servant had almost broken her heart at having to take a sort of secret and surreptitious farewell of Alice, the driver chirruped to his horse, and the two girls left Polvrehan for ever!

As they drove off through the misty morning they were both very silent, until they neared a turn in the road that led over the moors. From that turn, as Marian knew, they would see the last of Polvrehan. Then she could keep the secret no longer.

"Look at it, Alice, darling. Take a look at the dear, dear old home, for it is the last look we are likely to have. We are leaving it for ever," she whispered as she clasped her sister to her heart.

Alice looked at her wonderingly. But at last the truth seemed to dawn upon her.

"Leaving Polvrehan, Marian? Leaving it for ever? What do you mean?"

"Alice, my dearest child, be strong to hear what I have to say. When poor dear papa died he was a ruined man, and we are left without a penny in the world, and with hardly a friend either!"

"Oh, Marian, and I always thought we were so rich!"

"We were once, dear. But now even Polvrehan is sold, and the engine foundry—even these moors."

"But Mr. Cormack——"

"My darling, Mr. Cormack is too proud of his money, and has not, indeed, behaved well to us in this matter."

"How, Marian?"

"I cannot tell you. You must not ask. Only believe me when I say that he has deceived and wronged us."

"Oh, Marian, I can scarcely credit it—he, so kind, so gentle, so thoughtful."

"You must take my word, Alice darling, for I cannot give you proofs. But look! this is the last glimpse we shall have of the poor old home!"

They both looked their last in silence, clasped in one another's arms, and weeping

bitterly. Then they turned the corner of the road, and the view was intercepted. So they leaned on one another's shoulders, and cried all the way until they came to the cross roads. There they got down, and the boxes were taken out of the cart, and on them they sat and waited for the coming of the coach.

They had not to wait long, and were soon spinning along the broad highway over the moors to Plymouth. The day was awake now, and as the four brisk nags clattered along and the guard's bugle rang out its sweetest notes, the sun began to shine. Everything was looking bright and happy, and the pleasure of the brisk motion, the music and the musical beat of the horses' hoofs, would have made the journey delightful at any other time. But now they were overburdened with the sorrow of leaving home, and the world seemed cold and heartless to them.

They had eaten but little for breakfast—Marian from grief, and Alice from excitement. But now the keen morning air began to sharpen their appetites, in spite of their grief.

Thoughtful old Nancy! Just as the

spring-cart was leaving the door at Polvrehan, she had brought out a little paper of pasties.

"You'll want 'em, my dears, on the road, and I've made 'em myself, and I reckon they'll do you both good. God bless you, my dears. Think of poor old Nance sometimes while you're away." With these words the good old soul had thrust the packet into Marian's hand, and signed to the driver to go on.

Now as they neared Plymouth the girls began, as I said, to feel hungry. So Marian opened the parcel, and, behold, on the top of it lay four bank notes for five pounds each. Dirty, greasy, old provincial notes they were, but they were the accumulated savings of poor old Nancy's years of service, which she had thus delicately conveyed to the daughters of her dear dead master.

CHAPTER XII.

LAUNCHED IN LONDON.

"COME in here, my dears. This is my own room, and I have a nice fire going, and I'm just sitting down to my bit of supper, so if you will have a bit with me we shall be able to get on capitally. You must be hungry and cold, with all that railway travelling—though, for the matter of that, when I was a girl it was coach or wagon all the way, and terrible tiresome!"

So spoke good Mrs. Bartlett, who having been prepared for the arrival of the girls by Nancy, and told how to act so as to put them at ease as soon as possible, had performed the little farce of getting ready what she called "her supper" for their dinner.

A worthy, bustling, keen little woman was Mrs. Bartlett. She was an apple-faced, dark-eyed, plump widow, just the very person to let lodgings for single gentlemen. Lucky were the single gentlemen who took

lodgings at Mrs. Bartlett's, for she looked after their interests as though they were her own sons. She had once had a son, this brisk, busy, good-tempered woman—a son who had gone to the bad, and who had died in a hospital. Poor woman, she kept the prodigal's portrait reverentially, and there was a lock of his hair,—golden, silken baby's hair,—in the little golden locket at her neck. She had seen her share of grief, and there was much of the dearest portion of her life buried in the green cemetery where the prodigal slept beside his father. That father had died in the cholera year—he had been a dresser at University College Hospital, in Gower Street, and it was supposed had taken the disease from a patient, while in the performance of his duty. He was taken ill in the morning, and was dead at night. One of the surgeons was smitten down at the same time, but recovered, to crawl through the rest of his life a poor, broken-down wreck. I have often wondered why there are no decorations for men who battle with disease and death. There is no Victoria Cross for the brave man who, at the peril of his own life, snatches a fellow-creature out of the grasp

of a contagious disorder, before the approach of which others fly, pale and panic-stricken. Old Fourier's idea of crowning sweeps, scavengers, and others, who followed disgusting employments, was not such a very insane project. This of mine seems to me a most proper and just measure. But I suppose it will never be more than a dream.

Mrs. Bartlett, I have told you, was a woman who had known trouble, and sorrow and bereavement intimately, and though she was so cheerful and merry, was as near crying as anything in the world when she opened the door and let in these two poor orphans out of the night, which was drizzly and dark.

They had travelled third-class, to spare their scanty store of money, and their rough travelling companions had alarmed them. The roughness was not intentional rudeness; it was the mistaken good fellowship of a set of people they were not accustomed to. When honest Jack, coming up from Plymouth, where the "Glorious" was lying in the Hamoaze, saw these two girls in their new black dresses—new but not fine mourning—his rough diamond of a heart was touched, and he paid his uncouth homage

to such sorrow. Rum was mother's milk to him, so when he took his little bottle from his pocket, gave the neck a ceremonious wipe with his cuff, and handed it to the girls, he meant only all that was kind. But he scared them terribly, nevertheless.

When Pat—the splendid worshipper of a woman in distress—who had made a lucky "sthroke" at the railway works, asked the two girls when he got out at Swindon, whether they wouldn't like "jist a dthrop," he intended to be genial and gentle. But they shrank from him in terror.

And when the wife of the travelling clock-maker, who was nursing her baby and darning a very ragged stocking, asked them to take one of her sandwiches—great thick slabs of heavy bread, entombing a layer of bacon—she really wished to show her womanly sympathy, and I can forgive her for putting their refusal down to a wrong motive, and talking pointedly about people "who, being stuck up, hadn't ought to ride in third-class carriages."

The reception Mrs. Bartlett gave them—"familiar but by no means vulgar"—was indeed welcome. They sat down, too weary, and worn, and terrified, to cry even. They

rose from her hospitable table refreshed re-invigorated, and quite at their ease,—ever smiling. Mrs. Bartlett produced her little bottle.

"Now, my dears, just a wee drop of port wine negus, with a grate of nutmeg, to give you a nice sound sleep. Oh, you must! don't allow any one to be rebellious here. know all about it, and I know you ought to. Don't shake your heads, because I'm qualified practitioner, because poor B. was in the medical line. You're tired, that what you are—you needn't tell me that And you want rest and sleep—that's what you want. You needn't tell me that. And if you don't take my dose, I know what will be. You'll be both of you dreaming a night of falling over precipices, and waking up with a start. It's the muscles, you know, from being overworked, and unless you take this—there just a grate of nutmeg on the top—unless you take this you'll be tumbling down and starting up all night And that is a thing I can't have, and won't allow."

Running on in this strain, Mrs. Bartlett had made two steaming hot glasses of port wine negus, and had talked the girls into

taking them. Then she led them up to their rooms—very modest apartments, on the second floor—where everything looked "as clean and nice as a new pin," to use the worthy woman's own brilliant simile.

She saw them comfortably in bed, and invited them to breakfast with her the next morning. "She had not been able to make any regular provision for them, so they must come down and breakfast with her;" which they smilingly and gratefully promised to do. Whereupon she made bold to kiss them both, and bade them good night.

Whether it were Mrs. Bartlett's prescription or only the weariness of the long journey, I cannot tell, but the sisters were soon too sound asleep even to dream of dear old Polvrehan, now standing white and deserted in the moonlight in that distant valley, where the owls were complaining at intervals, and the dogs baying the flitting shadows with such melancholy long-drawn howls.

The unaccustomed bustle of so quiet a street even as Pratt Street woke the girls betimes, and they were down to breakfast early. They found Mrs. Bartlett up—she had evidently risen with the lark—though whether you could have found a lark within

five miles or more of Pratt Street, I cannc say.

"Come, come, this is capital! I did nc expect you down for some hours yet. N(that I like to see people lying late, but the would have been an excuse for you. You be sure to get on if you are good at gettir up, my dears; as B. used to say—

'Early to bed, and early to rise.'

That's my motto, dears. Why, do you kno that I can show you as clear as day that by my getting up early I have been able to save up money enough in the Bank to almost buy one of those boarding-houses, or private hotels, in Duke Street, St. James's; and if I can only do that my fortune's made."

The possession of a lodging-house on a large scale in the locality she mentioned was the one great ambition of this capital little woman's lifetime. And by hard work, honesty, and diligence—not by idleness, petty larceny, and carelessness, as is too often the case with lodging-house keepers—she had by this time accumulated a little sum at the St. Martin's Lane Bank, with which she intended to buy the long-desired realization of her visions.

She gave the girls a very good substantial breakfast, which they relished immensely. Change of air and scene already began to exercise its influence; and removed from painful associations, they could shake off their depression, and become almost cheerful.

In the afternoon Marian set out to look for an engagement. She visited several agents, and paid some of them money in advance for their assistance, which of course, under such circumstances, they did not greatly trouble themselves to give her.

She lost herself over and over again, and had to inquire her way frequently. As a natural result, she returned home wearied out and disheartened.

When Mrs. Bartlett found out what her errand had been, she said she was not much astonished at her want of success.

"Bless me, why didn't you tell me? The best plan is to look in the paper. Just ring the bell for me, there's a dear. Thank you. Yes, of course, you should look in the papers. Mary, just step up and ask the first floor if he will be kind enough to lend me the loan of the *Times* supplement just for half a second. When we get that,

my dear, I shall be able to show you where to look."

The paper was brought, and Mrs. Bartlett pointed out to Marian where to look for the advertisements for Governesses.

They found several; some requiring answers by post, others requesting candidates to apply at some library or news-agents; but all offering a salary the smallness of which surprised poor Marian. And she said as much to Mrs. Bartlett.

"Bless you, my dear, they're just about the usual figure. It's dreadful poor pay is governessing. What do you want—'Resident,' or 'Daily'? I should say 'Resident,' if you ask me. You get your meals regular, and you have a roof over you; whereas 'Daily' means wet or fine, hot or cold, any distance, punctuality indispensable, and you must find yourself. Take my advice, dear, and if you must be a governess—which is curious to me, considering that there are confectioners' shops, baby linen, and bonnets, or taking in needlework—be a 'Resident.' But you won't get more than about thirty to begin with. Why, lor, in some places, mostly schools, they don't even give that. It is 'in return for the advantages of a

comfortable home,' or some nonsense of that sort."

This was not very inspiriting. But Marian did her best to believe that Mrs. Bartlett was prejudiced and in error.

She selected several advertisements, answering some by letter, and sallying out next day in order to apply personally in other cases. She met with much chilling discouragement, and no little rudeness. But she persevered.

She was bandied about from shop to private residence—from one place to another; she was examined in her proficiency by ignorant people. But she persevered.

She was rudely treated by tradespeople, who did not like to be bored by their customers' governesses. She was scornfully entertained by powdered footmen at great houses; and looked down upon and snubbed by grand ladies. But she persevered.

Night after night she came back from her travels, weary, faint, and disheartened. But the good Samaritan, by name Bartlett, who resided at Number 175, Pratt Street, Camden Town, bound her wounds, pouring in oil, and carefully tended and encouraged her.

At last one day Marian came upon the following announcement :—

RESIDENT GOVERNESS.—WANTED, in a Gentleman's Family, a Lady, not over 30 years of age, as GOVERNESS, to take the entire charge of two young Children, and instruct them in English, French, and Music. She must be a member of the Church of England, cut out and make Children's Clothes, and wash and dress them. Salary, £30, and all found.—Apply, etc., etc.

Here, it appeared to Marian, was another chance. She was growing almost sick of "Applying, etc., etc." However, she went to the address indicated, and was at once referred to the residence of Mr. Orr, M.P., in Grosvenor Place.

She found the yellow chariot at the door, waiting to take Mrs. Orr to her dressmaker's, to see all the latest fashions just brought over from Paris. When the she-millionaire found out what Marian's errand was, she directed one of the brilliant canary-coloured footmen who were standing round watching their mistress's departure, "to take the young woman to the housekeeper's room, and let her wait."

So Marian waited for a couple of hours or so, when Mrs. Orr returned, and summoned the candidate for the splendid salary to her presence.

"I have come, madam, in answer to an advertisement in the *Times*——"

"Oh, you're a governess, are you?" says Mrs. Orr, examining the poor girl through a pair of massively mounted eye glasses. "What recommendations have you got? Why did you leave your last place?"

Marian explained that she was only commencing her career as a governess.

"Oh, we must deduct that from your wages. How old are you?"

Marian told her.

"That's a little too young. I don't think you can expect the whole thirty pounds, even supposing you suit. Are you good at your needle?"

"Yes, madam."

"And you can teach French, eh? Give us an example, come! Say 'How are you?' in French."

Marian obeyed.

"Yes, that's not bad. Do you know German?"

"The rudiments. But that is not mentioned in the advertisement. I can teach drawing to beginners, and arithmetic; but

these were not included in the advertisement."

"Oh, of course one can't put everything one wants into half a dozen lines. But they should have been understood where thirty pounds was offered."

Marian said she was prepared to teach them for the thirty pounds; but not if the reduction Mrs. Orr proposed to make were carried out.

The bargain was struck, and Marian went home to Pratt Street, pleased at having procured employment, but far from delighted with the mistress under whom she was to serve.

Alice was in dire distress at the notion of losing Marian. She must go out too she vowed, and they might perhaps be near each other, and see each other often. She should be wretched by herself in London she protested.

Mrs. Bartlett too was very sorry to part with Marian. She opposed the idea of Alice's going out as a governess; but the spoiled child did not submit to crossing with a good grace, so it was decided that she should advertise for a situation. Accordingly Marian and she laid their heads together to produce the following notice:—

WANTED, a SITUATION as Nursery Governess, in a Gentleman's Family, by a Young Lady, who possesses all the elegant accomplishments. Terms not of such consequence as a comfortable home.—Apply (prepaid), A. C., Brooksby's Library, Pratt Street, Camden Town, N.W.

Answers came in pretty readily, but most of them came from the provinces, which was not what Alice wished. The letters were great curiosities. Here a woman, who could not afford to pay, offered half of one of her children's beds as a recompense "for services in educating three little girls." There a lady, whose education had been neglected, offered "the use of a small bedroom and meals" in return for the acquisition of reading, writing, and arithmetic. In one or two instances the letters were evidently from men, and a few of these were masked proposals of a character that made Mrs. Bartlett bang the table with her plump fist, and vow all men were villains.

At length, however, a missive arrived with a splendid coronet on the seal, and a crest representing an open hand. It was dated Beaudechet, and ran as follows :—

"Lady Lacquoigne having met with A. C.'s advertisement in the columns of to-day's *Times*, will be obliged by that person's calling

at her residence in Hertford-street, Mayfair, on or after the 12th instant, not earlier than twelve."

"A lady of title, Mrs. Bartlett! Think of that! Oh, won't Marian be delighted? I must write to her at once."

"Don't you be in too great a hurry to jump for joy, my dear. I've heard of her ladyship, and unless I am very much mistaken she's a stinger."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BURIAL OF MARIAN CARLYON—THE BIRTH OF MARIAN CARLYLE.

THERE fell upon Marian, as she crossed the threshold of Mr. Orr's mansion, a prophetic chill and gloom. She seemed at once to understand her position, and felt as if she had been a governess all her life.

The splendid canary-coloured footmen inspected her and her slender luggage with a shade less interest, but not a shade more civility, than they would have bestowed on a newly-arrived under-housemaid. They summoned the page, and ordered him to take her boxes up by the back staircase, and they told her to follow him to the housekeeper's room, there to await Mrs. Orr's orders.

The housekeeper was a cold, hard, angular woman. She had been selected, as one would select a screw, for her hardness and inflexi-

bility, for she was, in fact, a screw applied by Mrs. Orr to keep down the expenses of the establishment. She doled out the tea and sugar to the servants every week. (Mr. Orr purchased those articles at wholesale prices, and found it profitable to supply his servants instead of paying them higher wages, and allowing them "to find themselves," as the domestic phrase has it.) She kept the key of the very small beer—which she dribbled out as prudently as if it had been aqua d'oro—whereby Mr. Orr saved considerably on the two shillings and eighteen pences he would otherwise have had to pay weekly to his men- and maid-servants. She made up the half-pounds of butter for the kitchen, and there, too, Mr. Orr profited, though Mrs. Pincher would have suffered penalties and pains had the Inspector of Weights and Measures ever ascended to her little dark room, which the upper housemaid, who was a devoted reader of the *London Journal* and other thrilling periodicals, had christened the Torture Chamber. And a Torture Chamber it was! There every sixpence was sweated, and every shilling stretched on the rack until it went twice as far as one ordinarily expects of a coin of that

denomination. There wages were crushed as in the iron-boot, and expenditure squeezed as in the thumbscrew.

It was a Torture Chamber, too, for the servants who came to seek places, or who were to be discharged. Mrs. Pincher was a sort of female Legree, and delighted to inflict pain on her inferiors.

It was a Torture Chamber, too, for the tradespeople who desired the custom of the house. Mrs. Pincher was naturally not disinclined to exercise her powers of extortion on her own account as well as for her employers, and the percentage she wrung from butcher, baker, and candlestick-maker would have set his Grace the Duke of Sutherland's hair so violently on end as to lift off his fire-helmet.

Mrs. Pincher was not calculated to improve poor Marian's spirits. She sat in a very straight-backed chair, which seemed especially designed to prevent her ever closing her eyes to her master's interest, and she was employed in totting up her book of household expenses. She did not rise or even lift her eyes as the governess entered, but waved her to a chair with one hand, allowing a fragment of her calculation to become audible—

"and six is seventeen and eight"—as if in explanation of her absorption.

When she had arrived at the end of the sum she closed the book with a sort of snap as if it were a pair of shears, and turned to Marian.

"You're the new governess, I suppose. My name is Pincher, and I'm housekeeper. I shall be happy to let you sit here at any time. What's your name?"

"My name is Marian Carlyle," answered Marian, who had determined to exchange the dear name of the old family for something less singular.

"Oh, Miss Carlyle," said the housekeeper, as if rehearsing the sound with a view to getting as much hardness and roughness into it as possible, "you'll find the children stubborn, rather, I think," she added.

"I always get on well with children."

"Have you seen these?"

"Not yet. I suppose they are gone to bed."

"Yes, thank goodness. I'm very glad you are come, because you'll keep them in the nursery."

"You don't care about children?"

"I can't say I do."

"You have no family of your own, perhaps, Mrs. Pincher?"

"No! I was fool enough to marry, but thank my stars, I was not such a fool as to have a family, though it would have served me right."

"You do not seem more favourably disposed towards husbands than children," said Marian, smiling, and trying to keep up a cheerful conversation.

"I'll tell you what, young lady," said Mrs. Pincher, turning round sharply from a cupboard, where she was locking up the grocery, "men are a thorough bad lot. You marry 'em because you think they'll give you a home and earn you money; and what do they do? What did Pincher do, which was a butler in a first-rate family? Why, as soon as he'd took a house for me and furnished it, he says, 'Let lodgings.' And I did, though a dreadful life it was, owing to the constant suspicions of lodgers, who always think you are robbing 'em. But that wasn't all! What must my gentleman do but quarrel with his master almost immediate, and then I have him on my hands. And, bless you, he wasn't in a hurry to get another place—not he! Stop at home, if you please, was his notion,

and so I had to support him, going out a spending money without end along with lot of servants out of place, and such l companions."

Having relieved her mind in this way, M Pincher sat down and began to measure (the servants' allowance of tea and sugar. A she gave Mr. Funnle, the butler, very sh measure indeed, as if to revenge upon 1 race of butlers the wrongs of the late l not lamented Pincher.

Marian watched her mournfully, and 1 depressed. There seemed to be an unwhc some atmosphere in the house, which chok the belief in things good and noble.

"Yes," resumed Mrs. Pincher in a minu or two, returning to the charge, and letti fly right and left at matrimony, "yes r that's husbands all over. Take my advice, don't marry, Miss Carlyle—though for that part I'm thinking governesses don't often marry, Miss, for men look for money or something as good. I had a fourth share in a boiled beef business when Pincher took me, but he squandered that in no time, bless you!"

"He appears to have been a little extravagant," said Marian, for the sake of saying

something, Mrs. P. having paused a moment, either from lack of breath, or excess of indignation.

"Extravagant! That he was to the day of his death—the very day of his death. Would you believe it? he went and died down in the country, and I had to pay for the bringing of him up to town, where we had a family vault—and the railway actually charged twice as much as if he'd been a live passenger. But there I could forgive him a good deal, just for getting out of my way so convenient, if it wasn't that he had the impudence to leave legacies to some of his family. Actually left 'em thirty pounds altogether, which was my lawful earnings, being scraped out of the lodgings, and in the bank. There, I was wild about that, and I wouldn't have paid it, only the lawyer said as his family could get it by law."

At this moment one of the canary-coloured came in, evidently under protest, to say that Mrs. Orr wished to see Miss Carlyle in the nursery.

Thither, accordingly, Marian mounted, after bidding Mrs. Pincher good night. Mrs. Orr was waiting for her at the door with an impatient expression, as if she had been kept

waiting, which was a fact, the canary-colour not having elected to hurry on so pitiful errand, and having devoted a few minutes Mr. Orr's dressing-room to the arrangeme of his dress before the cheval glass, and t study of his back parting with the aid o hand-mirror.

Mrs. Orr was out of temper, and it ma her, if possible, even more unprepossessi than usual. A fat, "fubsy" woman, with l great bare arms flashing with jewellery, a gold chain enough to moor the whole Prussi fleet, lying in coils on her coarse neck, wit dress worth thirty shillings a yard (a rich plu coloured velvet), bestuck with brooches, a with all the trimmings in bad taste and the colours about her out of harmony—is n improved by becoming a motly red in t face, and assuming the gobble of an enrag turkey cock.

"This won't do, Miss Carlyle. I have visitors to attend to in the drawing-room, and you keep me waiting like this!"

"I was not aware, madam, and am very sorry. I came the moment I was told you wished to see me."

"Miss Carlyle, you'll excuse me, but I am mistress in this house. I have been waiting

for you, and I choose to speak of it. I expect not to be answered or contradicted."

Marian could only bow her head and submit with a swelling heart to the tyranny of this reception.

"This is the room where you'll sit. Your bedroom is on the next floor, between the children's rooms. I hope you're a light sleeper —at any rate the sooner you learn the better, because Alicia is liable to sudden wakings, and wants plenty of attention. My maid will dress the children to-morrow, to show you how I like it done: after that you must do your own work. With regard to lessons, I don't interfere. Honoria, my eldest girl, who is extremely accomplished, will examine your pupils now and then, and see if you are getting them on. I shall expect the best report, remember, Miss Carlyle."

"I will use my utmost endeavour to deserve it, madam."

Mrs. Orr did not answer, but looked very hard at her, as if in doubt whether some covert insult were intended. It was one of the characteristics of Mrs. Orr's ignorant vulgarity that it was as sensitive as a woodlouse. The slightest touch made it coil up. She was always suspicious of slight and

insult. "Do you know who I am? Am I mistress in this house? Am I not Mrs Orr?" were questions constantly on her lips. She was perpetually discovering in the most ingenious and surprising manner all sorts of covert sneers in the merest commonplace remarks. It was the consciousness of her vulgarity that made her as uncomfortable a companion as a hedgehog. Her life was an endless effort to appear at ease in the society in which she had to move. "That *dear* Mrs Orr," the fashionables said audibly to those around them, "the most charming creature—such a delightful woman"—and then they would put up their gold eye-glasses and look at her, smiling and nodding love to her. And inwardly—for Mr. Orr was too important a person for them to venture to trust one another enough to make quiet asides—each of the fashionables was thinking what a fat, frowsy publican's wife she looked. And each knew the other was thinking the same thing, and Mrs. Orr knew that they knew and thought as they did. No wonder she was disagreeable.

She failed to find any concealed sarcasm in Marian's remark, but that merely made her the more certain, in her self-doubt and self-knowledge, that the sneer was there, only it

was very cleverly hidden. So she "took it out" in another way.

I must ask to be pardoned that figure about "taking it out." It always seems to me a happy phrase for such a commercial nation as we are. It treats human life after the plan of book-keeping. Some parents send their children to school and pay for their education not in hard cash, but the particular wares they deal in—Greek and Latin being exchangeable for beef and mutton—French and modern languages equivalent to rice and tea and sugar—and mathematics and maps barterable for rolls and cottage-loaves. In just this way we establish a standard of relative value quite as startling, and make as arbitrary a tariff of grievances and vengeances. How much geography would you expect to get for a quartern loaf? With how much abuse to common friends would you repay Jones's slight? He was walking with Lord Looby, and if he had bowed to you, would have given you a certain sort of investment in that nobleman. But he didn't, so you "take it out" by telling Tittle and Tattle, and goodness knows how many more kind friends, that Jones was expelled from school for stealing a pencil-case.

That is a fine commercial transaction. Y
"take it out."

Mrs. Orr was a woman of business. Sl
had entered her debt for the undiscover
insult, and she took an early opportunity
letting Marian have a little on account.

"There's nothing for you to do to-nigh
Miss Carlyle, so you must stop here idle;
but I shall expect you to make up for the
evening's holiday to-morrow. I'll send you
a candle. Mind you don't set anything on
fire; and I expect you to go to bed at ten,
unless at any time Honoria requires your
assistance."

With that Mrs. Orr swept down stairs and
returned to her guests, and very carefully
omitted to tell one of the footmen that a
candle was to be taken into the nursery until
she had left Marian to her meditations in the
dark for nearly an hour.

The nursery was a cold bare room, with
no indications of its consecration to child-
hood. Any memento of the little ones in the
shape of a broken toy would have made the
place less lonely. But the little ones were
pictures in little of their respected parents.
All the wild, irregular beauties of childhood
had been trimmed into formal yew-trees of

propriety. The Orrs were stunted into ill-tempered old people, who hoarded their toys, and played at morning-calls in a solemn manner, and hectored over the servants. They stuck no pictures on the nursery walls; they littered no childish treasures about the floor; they left no echoes of silver laughter in that darkening chamber. A parallelogram of light flung up on the ceiling by the gas lamp below the window was all that Marian had to cheer the gloom. She heard horses, standing in carriages at the door, champing their bits fretfully, and jingling their harness as if it were fetters. She felt a prisoner.

She groped her way to the window and looked out. It was very desolate! A red blur on the sky from the acres of flaring gas blotted out the stars who would have seemed like old friends. A continuous roar and deep growl, as if the city were a huge beast that made night hideous, were kept up by the wheels, and the hoofs, and the many feet hurrying along on all sorts of errands—but none on an errand of kindness or mercy for this poor woman.

Fortunately, Marian had been gifted with a stout heart and a noble spirit. She would not shrink from a duty—she would not try

to avoid a necessary pain. She was one of those who, having to lose a limb, would decline to take chloroform; and I must confess that I admire such foolish bravery, if you like to call it so, as I am afraid many will. She sat in that gloomy room, tearless, by the death-bed of her former self. She recalled the sweet, peaceful days of childhood, and the golden dreams of youth, and she placed them in the casket of memory, closed it, and laid it on the breast of the dead. Then and there, in the thick darkness, she laid Marian Carlyon in her grave, and there was no other mourner at the burial beside Marian Carlyle, and her eyes were dry.

From this moment, so she said to herself, there is an end to the Cornish girl, whose father was rich and whose life was pleasant and sunny. Henceforth lives Marian Carlyle the born dependent, the servant who must earn her wages bitterly, and bow to the will of her employers; who must bear undeserved blame in silence, and not expect a word of praise however well merited.

In truth, Marian Carlyle was another being. The instinctive knowledge of what her servitude would be—the impression which I have said was created by her first

step over the threshold of Mr. Orr's splendid unhomely mansion, seemed to be a new birth.

But we, I fancy, my reader, have even in our earliest days some gleams of the recollection of a previous state of being. Those mysterious memories of pre-existence, which puzzle our mature intellects as they bewildered our young minds, are things we all know. Newly-born Marian Carlyle had, no doubt, some such glimpses of a past, and among them you may be sure came the figure of a true honest lad to whom she was indebted for an understanding of the nobility of labour, of the beauty of energy, of the unspeakable delight of duties performed. If she had no such remembrance, why did she clasp her hands suddenly and say with a long sigh, "Even he would respect me once more if he could see how I shall bear all this."

There was also another memory which survived the dead Marian Carlyon. It was the thought of Alice, and the possibility of her having to suffer in this terrible way, which unsealed the fountain of tears in the heart of poor Marian Carlyle, the governess, and gave her relief at last. If affection has

its bitters, how exquisite are its sweets! it fills our breasts with pain, what infinite comfort there is in its power to reach the heart, and thaw the frozen source of tears!

CHAPTER XIV.

HIDDEN IN A FLOWER.

THE small black servant girl tapped at James Trefusis's door. He was back again at the little cottage near Woolwich, still working hard at the great gun that was to be. A very delicate experiment in connection with the improvement of gunpowder was in course of action just as the grimy domestic knocked.

"Come in!" It was an angry invitation; but the poor little wretch was not accustomed to much kindness, so she did come in.

"Please, sir, a gent'man wish to speak with you."

"Oh, bother! Ask him into the front parlour——"

"Oh, bother," broke in the visitor, who had followed the girl upstairs; "go into the parlour yourself."

"Charlie Crawhall! Why, what the deuce

brings you here? Is the colour-harmonic out, or what has happened to fetch y out?"

"The colour-harmonicon will appear multaneously with the Trefusis gun in the Great Exhibition of nineteen hundred and nothing. But in the meantime I have just come down to pick up a few tunes."

"How do you mean?"

"Oh, come along into Greenwich Park, and don't ask any questions."

"I can't go out yet. I must wait until——"

"Until all the beauty of the day is gone. And why? In order that you may half-poison yourself with the fumes of some beastly compound of 'villainous saltpetre' with other noxious drugs. Look you here, James, the philosopher—I am strong and excitable. The smell of chemicals has a powerful effect on me. I feel it working; and if you don't take me out into the fresh air in five minutes, I may do you a mischief."

"What a donkey you are, Charlie."

"Take me to my thistle, then! I know a bank whereon the *Carduus Benedictus* grows; it is on the further side of One Tree Hill. Let us go and lean our pensive brows upon

—or have our pensive browse upon it, as Ryder would say."

"Well, I suppose you won't let me do anything if I stop here."

"You may swear that."

"Then I suppose I must e'en go."

"I believe you, my boy, as Shakespeare has it."

"You know that Shakespeare hasn't it."

"Well, then, say 'the poet'—that's safe enough. But it's my belief that the line is by the author of

'And sorry wag cry hem when he should grone.'

It is very much in his style."

"I don't know anything about Shakespeare, Charlie, as you are aware. If it were a question in mechanics, I might lay down the law. But I know that isn't his; and you had better not chaff me, or I'll tie you to the mouth of one of these guns and blow you away."

"James, you are trifling. Get your hat and come out."

So James Trefusis put on his hat, and he and Charlie Crawhall went for a walk. They wandered into Greenwich Park, and finally threw themselves on the grass in a retired

nook under some trees, where there were n one-legged pensioners to pester them wit telescopes, and only a few gnats to make noise instead of the romping children.

Charlie Crawhall lit his brown lustrou meerschaum, the companion of his travel ar partner of his toil. A pleasant fragran speedily rose from the glowing bowl mingle with the perfumes of the early sur mer.

It was a lovely day in the early summer one of those days when it is hot enou to make you desire to be quiet, but not ho enough to make you feel uncomfortably baked if you keep still. The trees were in young fresh green leaf as yet, and the turf was studded with buttercups and daisies.

"Isn't this delightful, Jim?" asks Charlie, who is lying on his back with his arms flung up under his head, his knees drawn up, and his wide-awake thrust down over his nose.

"Yes, it's splendid!" answers the other, who is lying on his face toying with the grass and flowers, leaning on his elbows, and kicking his heels up.

"Doesn't one enjoy Nature more intensely for having been shut up among bricks, eh? I know I do. But you're just like the rest

of the world. Here you are within easy distance of this lap of Nature, but you prefer being dry-nursed in a laboratory. You never come here, do you? Confess!"

"Well, I haven't, and that's a fact. But you see I'm busy, for one thing, and I hate solitary walks for another."

"Doesn't Uncle Toby walk? Or is his sciatica still so bad that he can only hobble to Trim's sentry-box?" James's irreverent friends had got into the habit of speaking of the old artillery officer as Uncle Toby, while they described James's modest lodgings as the corporal's sentry-box.

"He doesn't stir out much; but of late less than ever, for he is getting blind, poor old gentleman."

"I'm afraid if he has neglected visiting this lovely Nature here which offers itself so freely, Jim, that the blindness must be of long standing."

"Bless you, if he did come, he would only be thinking how long a range he could lay down here, or how a battery would do mounted there to protect the river. His whole life is devoted to his ambition."

"You're getting very nearly as bad, Jim."

"Enthusiasm is catching."

"By Jove, I wish the complaint was epidemic!"

"Well, I don't know, Charlie. If we were all to be going at high-pressure, the increased velocity might send the world off the rails and conduce to a general smash. I should like to invent my gun before that event."

"That only shows what a muff you are! Nothing in this world is worth the having; it is the pursuit of it that constitutes happiness. The charm of blowing soap bubbles, which is a favourite amusement of mine, is to be found, if you analyse the matter, in the delightful way in which the bubbles break at the very moment when you run them down. If they survived the first touch—if you could keep them an instant—the joy would perish. A nice prismatic-hued bubble is just the ideal world for a man to try and conquer."

"You feel deeply on the subject. Shall I fetch you a pipe and some suds here?"

"None of your impudence! But I do enjoy a game at bubbles sometimes with a small nephew of mine, who thinks Uncle Charles is so kind. I'm not; I'm only feeding my ambition."

"Do you seriously believe pursuit is better than possession?"

"On my soul, I do. Which do you think are the happiest men, the great men who succeed or the great men who don't succeed?"

"I can't tell. I don't quite understand."

"I'm looking up into the sky, Jim, which is just now of the most intensely lovely blue. If I had my colours here, I should work away to get that particular tint, and the lovely colour of the clouds and the tree-tops against it. While I was feeling my way to it through infinite combinations and harmonies, I should be revelling in the enjoyment. But when I had reached it, there would be nothing more to do but stick the sketch into my portfolio, and walk on."

"Yes, but the triumph of achieving it!"

"And the doubt that your success may be only an accident, and that you could not repeat it. No, Jim; there's nothing in this world like not getting what you want, to make you happy. Doesn't a child go and flatten his nose joyfully day after day against the toy-shop window, until some injudicious friend goes in and buys the thing he has coveted so

long. And then the child takes it home a smashes it, incontinent."

"But we are not all children. Some us have noble dreams that would have no realisations."

"Not so noble as the dreams. Do yo know, Jim, that I think Dante might hav improved his Paradise by a description o the Elysium of Intellect, and it should con sist of a splendid hall hung with the picture that were never painted, stored with th books that were never written, the song that were never set down, the dramas tha were never acted, the music that was neve played. I should contribute largely to th picture gallery. I have such scores of de signs that will never be sketched, but would if I could only carry them out as I see them be the wonders of the world!"

"I'm afraid my poor gun will form a trophy in your gallery."

"So much the better for you. The grea men who succeed are only admired and re spected. The great men who fail are lovec and pitied. Failure is often the best kind o success, as the French philosopher migh put it. Besides, what is the object *yo* strive after? The better destruction of you

species. Is the invention of an implement of war, of a means of death and devastation, a jolly thing to reap laurels from?"

"That's nonsense, Charlie. In the first place, what interests me in the gun is the scientific part of the question. It is the accuracy that will plant a shot in a target that I think of. But in the next place, don't you think that the more terrible and true you make the machines of war the less war there will be? If you could establish it as an indisputable fact that in every battle three-fourths of the soldiers engaged must be either killed or seriously wounded, you may depend you would find nations less ready to go to war."

"Well, perhaps there is something in what you say, but that does not interfere with my original proposition, that you will be infinitely happier in your efforts to perfect your plan than you would be if you made the discovery this very moment."

"What a jolly little flower!" broke in James, still lying face-downward on the grass. "What is it, Charlie, do you know?"

He had picked a little yellow, trumpet-shaped flower, that was growing within

reach. After looking at it, he tossed it to Crawhall, who also inspected it.

"I'm no botanist, Jim, and can't say. I don't know that I ever noticed one before. But I'm botanist enough for one thing, and I'll give you the advantage of my knowledge. A lecture with illustrations about to commence."

He pulled the little yellow tube out of the green sheath, and sucked the end.

"All tubiform blossoms, my young friend," he said gravely, "are distinguished by the possession of an accumulation of honey or nectar at the base. This honey or nectar, you will observe, may be extracted by suction. There! Now the lecture is at an end."

"Very curious and interesting. Are there any more specimens of the plant about, I wonder?" asked James, searching for another yellow flower. He was a long time before he found one, and was obliged to rise in order to gather it, as it was out of reach as he lay. When he had followed Crawhall's example, he flung the tube away.

"Well, I don't think much of your nectar!" he said.

"There you are! An instance in point.

Why didn't you always go on contentedly seeking for yellow flowers? But no, you must needs find one, and then fruition is, as usual, followed by disgust."

James laughed.

"Of what value is this, now?" said Charlie, picking up the discarded blossom, and throwing it to James.

"None in the world," said the latter, picking it up carelessly. He began picking it to pieces, twisting it, and finally laying it in the palm of one hand, he brought the other down upon it smartly. The little tube split from end to end with a faint squeak.

He was on the point of flinging away the remains of the poor little flower, but suddenly arrested his hand, with an exclamation of surprise. He looked at it closely. It was wonderful! He could hardly believe his eyes!

Here in this tiny plant was hidden the secret for which he had been striving so long. The convolutions in the interior of the tube were the very design that had haunted his dreams and perplexed his waking hours.

The gun was invented.

"By Jove, here's the cannon, Charlie!"

he exclaimed, as soon as he had a little mastered his astonishment. "Here!" and he handed him the bruised flower.

"Ah, rifled by the bees as the poet would say! Not bad for you, James—but I think Nature is getting into your head. Your conduct is so odd that I must set it down to intoxication, produced by imbibing too much sun and air."

"Hi! stop! don't be a donkey! don't throw it away! It *is* the gun, Charlie, I'm not joking or drunk. Look here, I'll show you." And James sat down beside the artist, and pointed out the merits of the screw and the advantages of the particular convolutions, and a host of minute details.

"You've found it, then. You unhappy man!"

James sighed, for he remembered, now that he had reached the goal, that there was no longer for him the satisfaction that one woman looked upon his success with sympathy.

"What's that for, Jim?"

"For weariness."

"For love, I think. Has Uncle Toby got a niece? or is your landlady's daughter fair to see? I always set you down as a do-

mestic bird, not a born Bohemian. We shall have to make out your passport before long, I'm afraid. Come, tell us, Jim, is it Uncle Toby's niece? or is there a pretty barmaid at the Horse Artilleryman, at the end of your row."

"Don't, Charlie; there's a good boy."

And there was such unmistakeable pain in the tone of his voice, that Crawhall caught his hand and pressed it.

"I beg your pardon, Jim. I didn't know!"

"All right, old boy—of course you didn't. But come, let's go and break the news to Uncle Toby."

They walked home in silence. Charlie felt he had wounded his friend's feelings unintentionally, and he saw that he was lost in a reverie of the past. He saw that the recollection was a bitter one, and that James was obliged to acknowledge the truth of his philosophy. For it was evident that the brightness was gone out of the success, and the excitement of the pursuit was lost.

When they reached the old captain's cottage, Charlie with great delicacy declined to go in with James, and went on to the latter's lodgings.

The old soldier was smoking his little black pipe — the blue smoke curling up through his thick gray moustache — and reading a work on gunnery. James laid the little flower, which he had carried home carefully in an envelope, on the book.

"Do you know that flower?"

"Yes, of course; we used to call them 'Puck's Bugles' when I was a lad. I don't know the scientific name. But why do you ask?"

"Because that is the design for our rifled cannon."

James bent over the back of the chair and carefully indicated the portions of the flower which suggested the various parts of the bore. The old man followed his description closely. When it was finished he jumped up, took James by the hand, and shook it warmly.

"Egad, we have got at the beginning of it at last. Now we shall go in and win. Sit down; we must have a pipe and a tumbler of grog over this.

James explained that he had a friend waiting at his lodgings.

"Bring him in," said the Captain, "we'll have a jolly night of it. We don't find out

new methods of rifling guns every day, Trefusis."

So Charlie Crawhall was fetched in, and there was a mighty brew of punch, and the captain produced some choice Virginia. There was soon a richly perfumed cloud in the little room, and the old soldier and the artist got into a brisk conversation,—met upon some subject in which both took an interest, and talked away in style.

Poor James Trefusis sat silent. He had lost the excitement of pursuit, and was thinking of that former invention of his that ended so dismally, and of the words which met him on his return—words spoken by the lips from which he had dreamed of hearing encouragement and comfort.

"Where was she now? What was she doing?" These were the questions he asked himself, for he had no friends or acquaintance in Cornwall who could tell him what had happened there.

As he sat by the window in the dusky room, lit up only by the red fire in the bowls of the smokers' pipes, which glowed very bright sometimes as the talkers waxed warm in discussion, James Trefusis looked towards the west and saw a star glimmering out over

the dying sunset gold. Far away he pictured to himself the green lawn of Polvrehan, with the figures of Marian and Alice. Were they looking at the star, he wondered.

Alas! there was no truth in the picture. The greensward of Polvrehan was trod by strangers, and the daughters of George Carlyon were gone!

Nearer—far nearer than he imagined—under the canopy of smoke which blotted the glory of the sunset sky, the woman he loved was suffering and striving. They were neighbours in the great world of London. Often, doubtless, they passed along the same streets—possibly, within a few minutes of one another, they brushed against the same people—almost touched one another, very likely. But they were as much divided as if miles upon miles of sea rolled between them.

Was this to last for ever? Was that narrow boundary to divide them always? Who knows? Between oceans that yearn to mingle—between hearts that ache to beat in unison—Fate builds a narrow isthmus, or hangs a sombre veil, and they moan and throb for ever in vain.

But, ah, how much comfort might not these two people have derived from meeting

each other again! I am not so sure of that. Pride is a veil almost impenetrable, and divides hearts, and it may keep James Trefusis and Marian asunder. We shall see presently.

In the meantime they both suffer and struggle. They do not succumb and shrink into themselves. They work and wait!

CHAPTER XV.

ALICE'S ESCAPADE AND ITS RESULTS.

"A DEUCED pretty girl, my lady," said Lord Lacquoigne, as the new governess left the room where her young charges —like most poor men, his lordship was blessed with a large family—had been committed to her charge.

My lady raised her eyebrows, and looked at his lordship with an air of offended surprise, as much as to say, "Really I cannot be expected to listen to remarks on the personal appearance of servants!"

"A deuced pretty girl," reiterated the nobleman, addressing himself to his own reflection in the glass. He had been a very handsome man in his day, and perhaps he thought to himself, as he looked in that glass, that he might have invested his attractions to better profit. But then her ladyship

might have fairly said the same. She had been a fine woman—quite a belle. The fact was that these two people had, each of them, been blessed with sufficient good looks to have made their faces exchangeable for fortunes; but, as I have said, they made the fatal mistake of marrying one another, and so all the capital was wasted; but they never forgot to remind one another of what a folly each had committed.

"Have you received any reports of Henry this morning?" asked my lady, when my lord, having finished his survey of his looks, turned round and took up his *Times* again.

"Yes; his friend Langdale writes to say he is getting on famously. He is to be removed to Scutari in a few days. The wound in his leg is some trouble still."

"Poor boy, he must suffer," said the mother, and there was an unwonted tenderness in her voice; but it died out as she continued—"Of course he'll get a pension. Why don't you go down and see Sir Benjamin about it at once?"

"No good, my lady. We must wait to see how he gets on. There won't be any difficulty when the right time comes—at least I should think so. Our house has never been

backward in the service, and the country will no doubt recognise the fact." And his lordship drew himself up proudly, remembering the time when he was an officer in the 18th Hussars. It is true his services were brought to an abrupt conclusion by the sale of his commision, in consequence of pecuniary embarrassment. But, then, the Lacquoignes had really furnished a few distinguished soldiers. My lord, indeed, owed his title to the fact that his elder brother, who had been all through the Indian campaign with Wellington, got an unfortunate slash from a Cuirassier at Waterloo, which brought his soldiering to an end.

"You might at least go down to the Horse Guards and see if there is not a chance of getting him promoted. There must be many vacancies."

"Egad, not a bad notion, my lady. Are you going out in the carriage? You might drop me at Whitehall if you are."

"No; not until later in the day; and I am going towards the Marble Arch then—down the Edgware Road, in fact."

"Ah, then, while I think of it—just call in at that cheap stationer's and get some note paper. I'll stroll across the Park and

drop in at the Horse Guards, and see what's to be done."

So my lord set out, and my lady went on with her sewing.

Lady Lacquoigne, I have said, was a fine woman. She was tall and stately, and she had a most aristocratic nose. In spite of the careworn look which her face habitually bore, you saw that she was of noble birth.

But she was not a woman who inspired confidence and liking the moment you saw her. Hard and unmotherly, she was almost a stranger to her children, so you could hardly expect her to be very warm towards others. She froze poor Alice's heart in her bosom.

Luckily for Alice, however, the children were really nice children. They were not petted, and they were not much impressed with the advantages of noble birth, when they found it did not bring them either toys or pocket money. The Lacquoigne children never were brought up to know the use of money. It was an error in their education which avenged itself in after years. It was because as boys they had never known what it was to possess five shillings or half a

sovereign that the young heirs of the hou almost invariably ran headlong into debt soon they went to college or entered t army. There is no more fatal mistake th to suppose you teach children the value money by never letting them have any spend.

But the little Vorians were none the wor as children for their impecuniosity, and th were in all respects genuine and nice. Th took a fancy to Alice at once, and she w delighted with them in her turn. Befo they had been acquainted an hour, she w hard at work making dolls' frocks and draw ing pictures for them. She found from he ladyship that she need not press the childre to learn too much. The boys were to b grounded—there were two boys—in Englis and arithmetic, as they would, when ol enough, be sent to Eton or Harrow. Th girls, of whom there were three, were t be taught the elegant accomplishments—in fact, they were to be "got up" fo the matrimonial market. As the poo little things hammered away at the piano, or capered gravely through their dancing lessons, they were being prepared for the slave pen, just as in the East they fatten up

the fair Circassians to the requisite rotundity of beauty.

The servants of the Lacquoigne household were more agreeable than those of the Orr's, so that in this respect Alice was better off than Marian. The Lacquoignes grew their own servants as they grew their own vegetables. What had once been the flower garden at Beaudechet was utilised for the production of cabbages and asparagus. My lord could no more afford to get his supplies from Covent Garden than he could pay the tremendous wages expected by London servants. So he reared his domestics on his own estate. The old housekeeper at Beaudechet was always training a few lads for the service—the gamekeeper's sons, or any likely boy she met with on the estate. She was obliged to keep up a good supply, for after the footmen had been in town a season or two they began to have their eyes opened—their views were enlarged by the conversation of other servants—and they very naturally quitted my lord's service to better themselves.

The Lacquoigne footmen, then, were not so supercilious towards the governess as the canary-coloured giants at Mr. Orr's. Indeed,

the household generally was inclined to tre
her with more consideration—or perhaps
should say with less deliberate slight. Eve
my lady, feeling that the pedestal on whic
she stood was tall enough to allow of he
condescending gracefully to her inferic
without any danger of stooping being mi
taken for equality, was far more pleasa
than Mrs. Orr was under similar circu
stances.

Perhaps it would have been better fo
Alice if she had been made to feel he
position at once. It would have been
sharp pang to discover it so suddenly, bu
it would have saved an infinity of pett
annoyances which were always springing u
in her path. She had been so petted an
humoured, and was so conscious of th
pretty face that was a general passpo
for her, that she at times was guilty o
what my lady could not but set down a
impertinences.

On one occasion she had the audacit
to go out—it was on a Wednesday, whic
was a half-holiday as far as lessons wer
concerned—for the afternoon, taking th
omnibus and going over to visit good little
Mrs. Bartlett. That worthy soul was sur-

prised to see her, having some sort of knowledge of what is expected of governesses; but when she learnt that Alice had actually given herself permission without applying to Lady Lacquoigne, she was horrified, and told Alice plump and flat that she had better not go back, as it would only be to receive her discharge. Alice began to get frightened, and hastened back to Hertford Street; but her absence had already been discovered, and the footman who admitted her told her that her ladyship was desirous of a few minutes' conversation with her as soon as she arrived. Poor Alice's heart was beating fast as she tapped at the door of my lady's boudoir. It was called her boudoir, because it is the correct thing for a lady to have, but it was in reality a little private vault. There were no flowers—no birds—no charming books or pictures—no musical instrument—no embroidery frame to be seen in the chilly apartment. It was the head-quarters of the "res angustæ domi," which the Lacquoignes drove as far as possible out of sight elsewhere. It was, in fact, a combination of the housekeeper's room with the china pantry. Whenever that hard task-mistress Fashionable Necessity called upon my lady

to make some sacrifice at her shri
whether it were the necessity of givi
dinner or the necessity of going t
drawing-room, it was here that the m
of contriving this extravagance out of
general penury came to be decided upon.

Alice tapped at the door with a bea
heart.

"Come in!" rang out that hard vo
which—as much as anything else—crea
respect for the needy house of Lacquoign

Alice entered the room, trembling.

"I believe your ladyship wished to
me," she murmured.

Her ladyship fixed her cold, gray, aris
cratic eyes on the terrified girl, and sp
with a studied distinct harshness, wh
made poor Alice's heart cease beating,
drop dead within her.

"Do I understand that you have left
house without first asking permission, M
Carlyle?"—Alice had taken the same na
as Marian, at the latter's suggestion—
inquired for you during the morning,
was informed that you were out."

"I went to see a very——"

"Pray do not for a moment imagin
wish to interfere in any way with y

private affairs, friendships, or relationships. In return, I do not expect that you will interfere with whatever arrangement of my household seems right to me. In future, understand, if you please, that I never allow any one in my employment to arrogate to themselves any judgment as to the convenience or inconvenience of their absenting themselves from their duties."

"I assure you, my lady——"

"Pardon me—if you have anything to say, I shall be prepared to hear it when I have finished pointing out my wishes and commands to you. When I engage a nursery governess, I expect her to be constantly with the children. The tuition is, after all, a secondary consideration. I don't believe, in fact, that children learn anything under a governess except the proprieties of conduct, manners, and—obedience. I suppose you were prepared to undertake such a charge when you advertised for a situation. At the same time, I have no desire to prevent your going out—if you have respectable friends to visit, as I suppose you have. We had better, therefore, come to an understanding at once. The children go to church with us on the Sunday afternoon; and as

that is the best time for sparing you, we w
if you please, make it a rule that, when y
wish to go out, you shall arrange for Sun
afternoon, and make your application to m

"I have a sister, my lady, who is s
a governess. I should like to see her
times—"

"Of course, very naturally. Oh, yes; y
can go and see your sister next Sunday."

But Alice had learnt from Marian th
visits to governesses were contraband at t
Orr's. She never dreamt that there wou
be any difficulty with the Lacquoignes.

"I meant, my lady, might she not co
and see me occasionally?"

"You can hardly have sufficiently co
sidered that request, Miss Carlyle, befo
making it. Where can you receive yo
sister?"

Alice was silent. She did not dare
suggest the school-room, though she f
that there could be no harm in Marian
coming there. My lady sat back in h
chair—her head on one side, and h
aquiline nose a little raised, waiting
answer. As Alice had nothing to say, h
ladyship, after a pause, continued:

"Yes; I thought you had not duly co

sidered that request. It is out of the question."

The truth was my lady wished to have as few strangers as possible admitted to that part of her mansion which was not prepared for the reception of visitors. They would see the nakedness of the land.

The front staircase was carpeted, and adorned with pictures; and there were flowers in the conservatory, at the top of the first flight. There were tiger-skins and deer-skins for mats; and there were gilded balustrades, and a fine chandelier. But the back stairs were bare, and the landings scarcely boasted a ragged drugget. The whole arrangement of the house was planned in the same way. There were two footmen in the hall all the afternoon in full livery, with powdered hair and silk stockings. But the one who waited at lunch—there were never any visitors at lunch—waited in a striped jacket to save his livery. Dinner was gone through with due ceremony, and in full dress; but at breakfast there was no attempt at grandeur. In short, the house of Lacquoigne was a poor rubble-built edifice, plentifully stuccoed on the side that showed to the world; and my lady

very naturally did her best to keep the world from going round to the back, and discovering the very poor basis on which the imitation marble was laid. It was therefore, not to be expected that she would allow Alice to invite her sister to the house; more especially as that sister was a governess too, and would no doubt report to her employers the poverty of a noble family. Of course her ladyship could not conceal from herself the fact that people knew of that poverty; but that was no reason, she felt, why they should learn all the details of pinching and parsimony. A poor nobleman is in the abstract rather grand and touching; but if you saw him actually varnishing his own boots, or inking the seams of his evening clothes, you might be tempted to smile.

"Have you any remarks to make, Miss Carlyle?" asked her ladyship, taking up the book she had laid down on Alice's entry, as a sort of hint that she might go. "I said I should be happy to listen to anything you had to urge."

"I have nothing to say, my lady, except that I erred through ignorance in this instance. I beg your ladyship to excuse it,

and to pardon any inconvenience my absence may have caused. It shall never occur again, I can safely promise."

"Very good. Thank you. I have nothing to add. You can go."

This was one of the little disagreeables which beset the beginning of Alice's career. She went up to the school-room and had a good cry; whereupon Arthur—the eldest of the boys—comforted her by telling her that if he was ever Lord Lacquoigne, if anything happened to brother Henry, she should go out as much as she liked. Constance, the youngest girl, also attempted to console her, and offered to lend her the beautiful wax-doll that her godpapa had sent her on her last birthday. The kindness and caresses of the children were a solace and a relief; so Alice dried her tears, and tried to forget the circumstance. But it was a terrible blow, because it was evident she and Marian should never meet now. She wrote a long and dismal letter that evening, asking Marian what they were to do.

Of course the story of the governess's little escapade, and the interview with Lady Lacquoigne, had reached the servants' hall, where it enlisted the sympathy of the house-

maid, Martha. Accordingly, after the children were in bed, as Alice was finishing her letter in the school-room, there came a gentle knock at the door, and Martha came in. She made an excuse that she was in search of a duster which she had lent Miss Constance to wipe up some ink with. The goodnatured creature was brimming with the desire to comfort Alice, but she was a little shy about beginning.

At last, however, feigning to give up the search for the missing duster as hopeless, Martha came and placed herself behind Alice, and gave a little cough—one of those coughs which mean as plainly as words can speak, "Please, I have something to say if you will be kind enough to listen."

Alice turned towards her.

"Oh, if you please, miss—if I—oh, please—about my lady to-day—if you can't get out, if there's anything I can do—letters, or such, as you wish sent anywheres, I shall be very glad to be any assistance to you. There's a gentleman as is groom to the Honnable Captain Pranceby, who come to the servants' hall sometimes—which you'll please not to mention, miss, please—who will be glad to do anything of that sort for me if you have anything."

"You're very kind, Martha, but I'm only writing to my sister. It can go by to-morrow's post; it will be in plenty of time."

"Oh, indeed, miss. Ah, yes; but then, you see, I was thinking as there might be some one which you was to have met at any time particular, and as would ought to know."

Martha was under the impression that Alice, like every other well-regulated young person, had a sweetheart, who would be expecting to see her.

"Thank you very much, Martha, for thinking of me; but I was only going to see the lady with whom I lived before coming here."

"There—I call it very hard as you can't go out and see your friends—only going out a-walking with the children."

"I haven't many friends in London, Martha, only that lady and my sister. I should like to see her, but as she, like myself, is a governess, I don't know how it is to be done—but her ladyship says I can get out any Sunday afternoon I like, if I ask permission."

"Then you'll go and see her then, miss."

"Oh, no; they won't let her receive visitors, any more than her ladyship will allow me!"

"Oh, indeed! Well, now that's provoking, ain't it?" said the goodnatured maid; but she brightened up all of a sudden, and said, "I suppose she'll get a Sunday out occasional, miss? Because, if so, there's a bit of the Park, by the hornamental water, as is very retired, and quite pleasant, which I know, for I have walked there frequent with a young man as I kep company with in my last place. Now, you know, you might arrange for to meet there, which would be very agreeable to both."

"Really, that is a capital suggestion, Martha. I was wondering how we could possibly manage to meet. It is such a long way to our old lodgings. Thank you, Martha, indeed."

Alice wished to press a half-crown upon Martha, but she would not take it."

"Law, no, miss! I done it entire through thinking how hard it were on you, and what I should feel being similar situated. I wouldn't take a penny, Miss. No, not for worlds, I wouldn't."

And with that Martha hurried out of the

room, and went down to the servants' hall again, where she confided to the cook that the new governess hadn't got a sweetheart, and wasn't it odd? Cook, whose affections were trembling in the balance between A 276, whose beat was in Hertford Street, and a private in the 2nd Life Guards, agreed that the phenomenon of a nice-looking woman (here she glanced at her own red countenance in the polished meat-screen) without one sweetheart at least, was very peculiar, and she, too, ventured to think, odd.

Alice wound up her letter to Marian with an account of Martha's kindness, and mentioned the suggestion she had made. In her answer, Marian agreed that the idea was an excellent one, and told her sister that Mrs. Orr, for a wonder, had thrown no obstacle in the way of an occasional "Sunday out."

So the two girls, by degrees, became accustomed to the weary, dull monotony of governess life, varied at times by little flashes of sunlight when the long-looked-for Sundays came, and they met in St. James's Park, and talked over all their trials and troubles.

In this way the first half year of their servitude passed over, and then at the end

of the season they were separated. Al
went down with the Lacquoignes to Be
dechet, and—but for the separation fr
her sister—would really have passed 1
time pleasantly enough in the old hou
which at times reminded her of Polvreh
Marian accompanied the Orrs to their new
purchased estate in Kent — a very r
modern house, in the centre of grou
which were pleasant enough in spite of th
being laid out primly, and consisting of
yet very young trees. There was a no
old park close by, which was thrown o
to the public, where people picnic'd a
spent jolly days in summer, and I hope w
duly grateful to the splendid generos
which admitted them to the place, and
no damage to the property. As if in c
trast to this magnificent liberality, Mr. (
placarded his grounds with threats of l
against trespassers, and promises of shooti
and hanging to stray dogs or cats.

Marian missed her sister terribly, and
more miserable than she did in town. I
she bore it bravely, and did her duty.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN AFTERNOON IN A PUBLIC OFFICE.

JAMES TREFUSIS and the Captain having now got fairly launched on the right course to success, worked away without ceasing. The neighbours were anything but delighted with their efforts, for a perpetual small cannonade was carried on night and day, by these indefatigable artillerists. One or two of the neighbours who happened to be nervous sufferers really met with severe losses. Old Mrs. Parkins, who "had never been the same woman since the fire as burnt her out of house and home, which she discovered through opening of a cupboard door by the side of the fire-place to get her shawl, and flames a-bursting out sudden as would have devoured her but for her being fortunately drawed out by the feet by a policeman which happened to be looking down the area"—this good lady, I

say, was in the act of putting away her te service when the two opened fire o evening. Down went the tray, and cra went the crockery, to the infinite agony Mrs. P., who "dratted them popping a banging idiots" with great fervour. M Tomkins, who was very rheumatic, w always being startled by the sudden d charges, which made him jump and st in a manner very trying to one to wh movement was a thing to be perform quietly and by degrees. Mrs. Stevens, wh was a laundress, declared that she wa frequently receiving complaints from he customers about the perforated—she sai perpetrated, but she meant the other wor —state of her linen. And I am bound t confess that for an arm in which precisio was boasted as the principal merit, th Trefusis gun certainly did wander a littl in its intentions and aims.

But James and his partner in labour wer not easily discouraged. They worked a their invention until they had brought i to a high state of perfection. They the devoted their attention to discovering th best sort of shot for their gun, and at las succeeded in satisfying themselves.

The next step was to patent their invention, and having done that, to get a model gun made. That complete, they determined to submit their plan to the military authorities.

"It's no use, Trefusis, I know. We shall never get a chance—but I suppose we must try."

"Well, but the excellence of this is so self-evident, they will have no hesitation."

"You've got to get them to look at it first, my boy."

"They're sure to do that, I think."

"Wait and see—wait and see."

"I fancy you're just a little prejudiced against the officials. Confess it—are you not?"

"No, not a bit. But I know them."

"Knowledge is power," said James, laughingly.

"Yes, but knowledge of official dilatoriness does not give one the power of dealing with it. I'll tell you what it is, Trefusis: you laugh at me, but I have known the pluck and spirit worn out of a man by the long course of—well!—what you will have to begin."

But James was incredulous still. He

thought the old soldier was perhaps a litt soured by age, or believed he had be slighted. As for the gun; that, James sa to himself, was so plainly the right thing it was so strong, simple, economical, a accurate—that it would recommend itse It had only to be seen to be appreciated.

So James set to work to obtain a hearing and a trial for his gun.

It was not a very easy thing to find out what was the right course to adopt. He first of all wrote to the Horse Guards. For a fortnight he waited patiently. The old man said he might expect an answer in the course of next year—but when the fortnight was expired James began to fancy he must have addressed his letter wrongly, or omitted to post it. Then he came to the hopeful conclusion that the description and drawings of his invention had so clearly shown its merits that the plan was accepted, and that the delay in answering his letter arose from the necessarily deliberate arrangements as to the purchase of the gun. He told the Captain so. But he only laughed at him, and said he would change his opinion before he was many years older. At last there arrived an official missive, an important-

looking big envelope with a big seal, and bearing the superscription, "On Her Majesty's Service," in large letters. James was quite delighted with this splendid document, and opened it with an air of pride that mightily amused his friend.

Alas! the long-looked-for, much expected letter was merely a formal acknowledgment of his, and a brief explanation that "this department" was not the right one to apply to in such cases as the one submitted.

So there was James as far as ever from his object.

"They might as well have returned my letter and the drawings. I have a great mind to write and ask for them; they have probably forgotten to enclose them," said James.

"If you write, you'll perhaps only get snubbed for your pains. Or if you do get the valuable documents back, it won't be for a month or so, and you could do them all over again in a quarter of the time."

"I wonder, when they said it wasn't the business of that department, that it didn't occur to them to tell me where I ought to take my invention."

"Catch them at it! They can't be ex-

pected to do more than their own dut
One wouldn't mind if they would only
that."

"Wouldn't you suppose the Commande
in-Chief was the right person to go to
such a matter?"

"Well, yes; I confess I should. But
suppose the Ordnance is the place."

To the Ordnance Office, therefore, Jam
wrote. And then came another prolonged
wait. However, official dilatoriness does not
last for ever, and at length another big envelope, with the talismanic "On Her Majesty's Service," arrived. This time James did not feel any particular emotions of pride and delight in the possession of the missive.

He opened it. It ran as follows:—

"Sir,—I am directed by the Secretary of State to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the —— instant, with its inclosures, and to acquaint you in reply that your application is under consideration, and that when a decision has been arrived at a further communication will be addressed to you. I am, however, to add that as applications of this nature have to be submitted in order, some time will probably elapse before any definite conclusion can be come to.

"I am,

"Sir,

"Your obedient servant."

The signature was most imposing—written in a bold and flourished hand, but unluckily—because the signature is an important part of a letter—it was perfectly impossible to make out the name.

"There, my lad," said the old Captain, when he had finished reading the missive; "now you're shelved for several years at least."

"Oh, come, I can stand a good deal, but that will hardly be bearable."

"Well, if not years, months, at any rate."

And the old gentleman was right. Months did pass, and James heard not a word. At last he grew too impatient to bear it any longer, so he started off one fine day to pay a visit to the Ordnance Office.

On entering the hall, he found himself the centre of the curious gaze of about half a dozen messengers, who seemed to be engaged in doing nothing serenely. Although they inspected him carefully, they did not condescend to offer him any further attention. After waiting for a minute to see if they would take any notice of him, James determined to address one of them.

"I have come to make some inquiries about a letter I wrote some time since."

"Raggets!" said the man he spoke to, turning to another messenger, and paying not the least attention to James; "Raggets —wanted here."

Mr. Raggets, who was a very old and deaf man, shuffled over to James, and asked him what he wanted.

"I wrote a letter some time since, and I called to see if there was any chance of getting an answer."

"What was the subject, sir?"

"I don't understand you."

"I mean what was it about, sir: inquiry about a soldier, or application for an appointment?"

"Oh, I see! It was about a gun—a new invention."

"Oh! gun. Let me see—Mr. Crafer's branch, I suppose, sir. Here, Clarke! take this gentleman to Mr. Crafer."

Clarke, a small smart-looking boy, led James, with a "This way, sir, please," through a number of dark and intricate passages to a door on which was painted the name of Crafer.

James knocked, and the boy left him. After waiting a moment or so, James knocked again a little louder.

"Come in," shouted a voice, and James opened the door and walked in.

There were four or five desks and tables in the room, at which two or three gentlemen were seated, engaged in writing or reading. One tall, pale young man was standing in front of the fire. Another was gazing out of the window, and a third was engaged with a biscuit and a bottle of beer on the mantelpiece.

This was rather a puzzling multiplicity of "Mr. Crafers" for James. "Methinks there be six Crafers in the field," he might have said with some justice. He was, of course, quite at a loss. The gentlemen had all given him an inquiring glance as he entered, and then they subsided into their former occupations.

For want of a better guide, he determined to trust to chance entirely, so he walked towards the tall young man on the rug, but that worthy no sooner divined his intention than he bolted at once to one of the tables, and plunged wildly into a large book with an air of intense study. So James transferred his attention to the youth with the beer and biscuit.

"Mr. Crafer?" James began, hesitatingly.

"No. Mr. Crafer sits there," indicating : desk with a wave of his biscuit. But Mı Crafer was not sitting there, so it must b presumed the young gentleman meant b using the present tense, that Mr. Crafe was in the habit of sitting there.

There followed a pause, the gentlema with the biscuit looking nervous and ur comfortable, and trying to appear as if h were not eating and drinking. At last h ventured to ask James another question.

"Is it public or private?"

"I wrote a letter some time since about a gun which I invented and wished to submit"——

But the young man with the biscuit began to stare in an idiotic manner, and appeared so entirely at a loss what to do or say, that James stopped.

"That isn't for us is it?" asked the devourer of the biscuit glancing at some of his brother clerks. They didn't answer him.

"Mr. Crafer is not in the room just now," he continued, turning to James; "perhaps you will be good enough to speak to Mr. Bantam," and he indicated a little fat man who was reading the *Times*.

James accordingly went to Mr. Bantam, and laid his case before him. Mr. Bantam rubbed his bald head sagaciously for a minute or two, as if to stimulate his brains.

"Who sent you to Mr. Crafer?"

James explained that he had been directed to apply to him by the messenger in the hall.

"Ah, yes. It isn't done in our room. You should have gone to No. 76. Who's got 76 now?" he asked of his nearest neighbour.

The nearest neighbour looked up at the ceiling for a minute, and at length stated that he thought Brownlow, but wasn't sure; whereupon another clerk said, "Yes, it was Brownlow," and was contradicted by a third, who alleged it was Tapper. The first clerk here interposed, and said, "No, Tapper was in 23;" and there was a brief but brisk discussion, in which the Tapper faction was at last routed by a reference to the office list—a reference which Mr. Bantam might have advantageously made at first.

It having been ascertained, then, that Brownlow was the man who governed 76, Mr. Bantam rang the bell and told James that he would send some one with him to

Mr. Brownlow. At this juncture a gentleman, who had apparently been very hard work writing at a desk in one corner, seemed to wake up suddenly, and addressed Mr. Bantam.

"I say, I don't think 76 is the right room. Inventions are Bagley."

This assertion was received with great delight by the defeated Tappers, who said, "Yes, of course it was not for 76!" Finally, the awakened gentleman in the corner pronounced that perhaps, after all, as it was a gun question, it would be best to send James to Wigley. The messenger having by this time arrived, in answer to the bell, James was committed to his charge, and he was told to take him to Mr. Wigley.

James thanked the gentlemen for their trouble. As he was leaving the room he took a sly glance at the desk of the awakened gentleman in the corner, and found that the writing on which he had supposed him engaged was really a drawing —a rough caricature of him (James) as he appeared while conversing with the gentleman with the biscuit.

The messenger conducted James through another labyrinth of passages and up a great

many flights of stairs, and at last ushered him into the presence of an old gray-headed man, who had a room to himself. "Mr. Bantam, sir, sent this gentleman to you; it's an application about a gun, sir," said the messenger. Mr. Wigley got up from his chair.

"What can I do for you, sir?"

"I sent in drawings and a description of a new gun; I received an acknowledgment, and was told I should hear again. I called to see"——

"Mr. Bantam ought to have known better, sir. I'm afraid he has given you a walk for nothing. It is quite another branch that you want," and the old gentleman rang the bell furiously, and sent James off under charge of a fresh messenger, despatching also a huffy message to Mr. Bantam.

The messenger took James downstairs, and halting at the end of a long passage, said, "At the end, sir. First door on the right. You'll see the name on the door. Mr. Ledbitter."

James followed the directions, but unfortunately the end of the passage was too dark to allow of his reading the names on the

small cards nailed on the doors. So he opened one at hazard, and asked for Mr. Ledbitter.

"Next room," said one of the occupants of the room; and so at last James found Mr. Ledbitter, and laid his case before him.

Mr. Ledbitter was evidently a very nervous gentleman, and he was clearly overburdened with work. He had combed his hair with his fingers till it stood on end all over his head. His desk was strewed with open papers and printed forms in terrible confusion.

"Application. Gun!" said Mr. Ledbitter, musingly, worrying his hair all the time into a wilder state of rebellion.

"Yes; a new principle of rifling."

"Ah! they're all that. What is your name, sir?"

"Trefusis."

"Yes, yes. I remember seeing that name. I think the case has gone on. Take a seat."

James sat down, and Mr. Ledbitter dived among his papers until he found a little slip, on which he wrote down James's name, and then rang the bell.

"Here, Parker," he said, to the messenger

who had answered the summons. "Just go to Mr. Gleeby, in the Registry, and ask him for the number of a paper about a new gun invented by some one of that name. When did you send it in?" he asked, turning to James, who told him how many months ago.

"Oh!" said Mr. Ledbitter, "then you may depend upon it, it is with the authorities!" and he plunged into his papers.

James sat and waited about half an hour, when the messenger returned with the slip, on which some cabalistic characters were now inscribed.

"Where is the paper?" asked Mr. Ledbitter.

"You only told me to get the number, sir!" said the man.

"What's the good of that? Get me the paper, of course. Make haste, this gentleman is waiting for it," said Mr. Ledbitter testily, returning to his papers.

The messenger still waited by the desk, without speaking.

After a moment or so, Mr. Ledbitter became conscious of his presence.

"Well, what is it?"

"They won't give me the paper withou your requisition, sir."

"Oh, ah, yes—to be sure!" and th requisition was written and despatched.

James waited again—this time for nearl an hour—when the messenger returned wit the requisition.

"You've been a very long time," said Mr. L., "where is it?"

"I have been tracing it down, sir. It is charged to you by the Artillery Branch, on the 12th of the month."

"Pooh, nonsense. It went on to the authorities. Just bring me my book."

The book was brought, and on reference to it Mr. Ledbitter was obliged to own that "he must have got it somewhere." Finally, he discovered it under his very nose, it being, in fact, the paper on which he was engaged when James arrived.

"Oh, yes," said the unblushing Ledbitter, "here it is. I thought I remembered seeing it lately. What is it you wish to know?"

James expressed a desire to learn when there would be any likelihood of his hearing what was thought of his plan.

"Oh! Well, you see, it's under consi-

deration. I shall send my report forward in a day or two."

Would it be settled then? James inquired. Oh dear no! it would have to be sent back to the Artillery Branch, and then to the Private Secretary, and then to the Director of Ordnance. Would the question be decided in a month? James inquired. Mr. Ledbitter really could not say. In a year? Mr. Ledbitter still declined to offer an opinion. Could Mr. Ledbitter say whether there was any chance, judging from the present stage of proceedings, of the gun being adopted? Mr. Ledbitter immediately shrank into his official shell, and refused to divulge the secrets of the office.

So after all his trouble and waste of time, James went home no wiser than before—except as to the manner in which public business was conducted at the Ordnance Office.

CHAPTER XVII.

A MEETING IN THE PARK.

THERE is something exquisitely delightful in spring, even in London. Indeed I am inclined to think that, as a prisoner learns to love the narrow strip of view he sees from his grated window better than all the world beside, so the poor folk who are imprisoned in the great capital learn to value the glimpses of spring which are granted them. They cannot afford to overlook a mite of it. The bursting of the chestnut leaf from the brown sheath—the mist of green that spreads and deepens on the elms—the very chirp of the dingy sparrow—they note and prize. And the delight such a mere instalment of Spring should give them ought to be very intense indeed, for they miss much of its real loveliness. They do not know what it is to wander where the young corn is springing with its fresh bright

green, and its colonies of larks, that soar and sing—not to mention the myriad of other birds, bright of colour, sweet of note, that perform Nature's matin-song

All at once, and all in tune!

They know nothing of the pure intensity of a warm spring sky—so deeply, calmly blue that the budding elms shine out almost golden against it—so blue, that in meadows where the broad-bladed grass is abundant the hue is caught and reflected by the glossy herbage, and a tinge of azure gleaming here and there in the fields tells how intense is the colour of the depths overhead. They know nothing of the glorious silence—so vast that you can hear the grasshopper churring in the next field—a silence that is only the more perceptible because at times the cuckoo's note sets you puzzling where the bird can be; or the low of the kine, grateful for the fresh herbage, comes to you; or the birds pipe and twitter—the bold blackbird, with his rich whistle—the "wise thrush," who

Sings his song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture,
The first fine careless rapture;

or sweet nightingale, whose note is, by day at least, anything but melancholy. All these sounds of Nature do but enhance the stillness where the hum of insects is heard instead of the murmur of a million men. But now and then humanity asserts itself, not unpleasantly or obtrusively. The rattle of a far-distant train, the voices of the workers in the fields, or the quaint chant of the bird-boy, will fall on the ear to tell you that you are not in an uninhabited land. Or the smoke goes wavering up, blue against the newly-leafed elms in the hedgerow, where a little red gable peeps; or you see children in the fields gathering cowslips, and their merry laughter ringing out harmonises with the rejoicing sounds of Nature.

All this the poor Londoner misses. It is true that he can at times take a flying glimpse of the country. He can rush away for a gasp of unsmoked air. But he finds himself a stranger to the birds and leaves and green things. They are not familiar to him, and he has not watched them from the first vernal stir that made the buds begin to swell and the clubs of the fern unfold, and sent the starling off to build his nest under the cottage eaves. He can't remember the

time when that broad bright green leaf on the lowermost bough of the chestnut was no bigger than a fly's wing, and he doesn't know the particular hedge where there is always a nightingale to be heard. In fact, he pays a mere formal morning call to Nature, and feels no more at his ease than most morning callers. Nor is it the unhappy Londoner only who misses these things. Rich folks and noble are, of their own free will, losers in the same way. They spend immense sums on their estates; they beautify the villages near their country houses; they have lovely flowers planted, and they have the hedges trimmed, and they place picturesque little plantations along the road, or plant groups of trees at the junction of two or three highways. And then—just when they are going to benefit by what they have done—when they are going to realise the profit on their capital—when generous Nature, who is indebted to them for all this, is going to repay the loan with glorious interest—lo and behold! my lord and my lady order out the family chariot, and go off to town for the season! So Hodge, the ploughboy, and James, who looks after the cows, and the young artist, who is stopping

in the village, and the poor author, who is on a visit to an old chum, who is now vicar of the parish—get all the good things which my lord and my lady have paid for.

"Lord Lacquoigne and family, from Beaudechet," says the *Court Journal* early in the season. And the world no doubt is much pleased to learn that his lordship has arrived in town.

Poor Alice was getting used to her mode of life now, but she was very sorry to leave the country just as it was putting on its fairest. However, there was no help for it; so she had to bear it with a good grace, and satisfy herself with as much of spring as is vouchsafed to the Londoners.

She was, moreover, greatly consoled by the remembrance that Marian would probably come to town, too, in a short time, and that their walks in the Park on Sunday afternoons would be very pleasant—far more so than they had been just before my lord took his family down to Beaudechet, for the days had been cold and drizzling, and depressing, as only thorough London winter days can be.

Mr. Orr was in town quite as soon as Lord Lacquoigne. You would hardly expect

otherwise; for were not the weighty interests of the nation at large, and Axeford in particular, entrusted to Mr. Orr's keeping? There never was a member more regular in his attendance than Mr. Orr; he was the first to come and the last to go, and he was always sure to be the one in the little select party that Mr. Speaker points at with his hat as he proceeds to count the House, "at the suggestion of an honourable member." Mr. Orr's pride was never to neglect a duty. He attended to his business in the City daily as long as he was in town; and then he went down to the House (he was far too correct an M.P. ever to dream of using any other expression than "went down" to describe his departure towards St. Stephen's), and sat there until very often all was literally blue—at least overhead. While he was in the country he devoted two or three hours a day to a voluminous correspondence which he kept up with his office in town. Oh, Mr. Orr never neglected any duties—except the Christian virtues. He never neglected any duties; that is at least unless you count such trifles as humanity, charity, loving-kindness, mercy, and justice, as duties. At any rate, he never omitted to present himself at the

doors of "the cosiest club in London"—to wit, the House of Commons—on the first day of Session.

My Lord of Lacquoigne came to town early because he was expecting the arrival of his son from Scutari, where he had been in hospital ever since the battle of Inkermann. My lord was fond of his son, I think, though my lady, it is to be feared, looked upon all her children as encumbrances.

Alice was in a flutter of expectation, which, however, she contrived to conceal from the stern eyes that glared stonily on either side of that aristocratic nose of my lady's. Alice had always been subject to that feminine weakness, an admiration of military glory and show. It is extraordinary how mild and gentle ladies are affected by the sight of a red coat or a pair of shoulder-straps! They would shrink from their own brother if he had killed a single man, and were merely a civilian; but they idolise the warrior who has pistolled three, and cut down six, and fired away a dozen Sepoys from a gun. I don't for a moment mean to say but that the heroes deserve no attention, but the sex does seem to be rather contradictory and uncertain, does it not? Here

was Alice, who would have screamed at a mouse, and certainly never would have found courage to kill one, looking forward to the arrival of this young fire-eater with great curiosity and anxiety.

The Honourable Henry Vorian's two brothers sang his praises loudly, as you may imagine. He was really kind to the lads, and supplied them, when he was at home, with pocket-money out of the funds which he should have reserved for the settlement of his debts; so the lads were naturally fond of him. But they had also read of the great battle in which their brother had taken part, and they knew the description pretty nearly by heart. But they added to and improved the narrative so much at every recital that at last, if you had credited their account of it, the battle of Inkermann was won by Captain the Honourable Henry Vorian single-handed against the whole Russian army. Alice had heard the story so often that I think she really half believed it.

You remember Alice had always been a little disposed to admire "a real captain," so it is no wonder that she looked forward to Henry Vorian's arrival, for he was not

only a real live captain, but one who had seen service and had been wounded.

She and Marian met in the Park, at the old place, on the first Sunday after their arrival in town. It was a lovely spring day, and London's instalment of the delights of the season was large. The trees were all fresh and green, and even the grass was less sooty-looking than usual. The water was placid, and reflected as much blue sky as could penetrate the perpetual atmosphere of smoke which hangs over the metropolis. There were a few aristocratic birds—I suppose at least, they were "noble birds" come up for the season, for I can see no other reason why they should exchange the country for the town—singing and chirping in the trees. And then there was the Sunday look which everything seems to put on once a week—I don't know why or how—and the people, dressed in their best clothes, sauntering about in the Park, or seated on the grass. And over all the ceaseless clamour of the bells of London's numerous churches clashed out merrily, and the roar of the streets was hardly heard, there is so little traffic on a Sunday, comparatively.

Marian was at the rendezvous first, and

sat down, feeling as if for an hour or so at least she were emancipated from her slavery, and her own mistress once more. She enjoyed the delightful spring weather, with the bright green of the young leaves, the blue sky, the warm sun, and the cool breeze. She became lost in thought at last, and began to indulge in all sorts of day-dreams, from which she was aroused by finding Alice's arm round her neck.

"You dear old darling, a penny for your thoughts," said Alice.

"How can you be so reckless, my dear?" said Marian, with a grave smile; "a poor governess has no right to be throwing away her money in that way!"

"Oh, I have got more than a penny, Min; I've just had my quarter's salary. It is a little overdue, but her ladyship told me the rents hadn't come in. Marian?"

"Yes, my darling."

"Are noblemen ever poor?"

"I believe so, and they have a position and appearances to keep up."

"Law, there; I declare I thought a nobleman couldn't be poor, and yet one could not help fancying Lord Lacquoigne was poor, because they do such funny things."

"I believe his lordship is poor. You know Mr. Orr is a friend of his—he and Mrs. Orr were stopping at Beaudechet this Christmas, weren't they? And I have heard him speak of his lordship as being very poor indeed. But then Mr. Orr is so wealthy that what seems 'very poor' to him might seem enormously rich to us."

"Isn't it odd, Marian, that Mr. Orr, who is in business, should be so much better off than his lordship? He isn't half such a gentleman, and not nearly so agreeable. Lord Lacquoigne is really very kind to me in his manner, Min. But my lady is so terribly stiff and cold I can't get on with her. She is really what good Mrs. Bartlett called her —'a stinger.' She can say such disagreeable things with a quiet voice and a smile."

"I'm afraid you're not very happy, Alice dear."

"Oh, yes, I am! I get on capitally with the children, who are nice little things. And what *do* you think, Min?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said Marian, patting her sister's cheek affectionately.

"His lordship's eldest son, who is an officer in a regiment of the Guards, is coming home, wounded, from the Crimea!"

"Dear me, what a treat for certain people who have a remarkable liking for a gallant officer."

"Now, don't you begin to tease, or I'll go home. Besides, hasn't every one a right to be proud of our gallant soldiers?"

"Oh, of course, especially when the gallant soldier in question is young, handsome, and the heir to a peerage."

"Mind! If you don't take care, I shall go home!"

"No, please don't; I promise I won't say anything more about captains and red coats."

"Now, don't be so provoking! I can't tell you anything without your beginning to tease. But won't it be nice to see some one who has been in a real battle in the Crimea?"

"You little goose, I believe you are wishing you had been in a 'real battle' too. You would have got in a terrible fright if you had been within twenty miles! Just fancy all the big guns firing! Why, you'd go to bed and cover your head up, and die of fright. And yet you think it so nice to see some one who has been in a 'real battle,' and perhaps killed one or two real men. What a ferocious little person you are."

"There! You're teasing again!"

"Well, Alice darling, if I am, it is only fun, and because I really don't know what to think of such a susceptible heart as yours exposed to the fascinations of an interesting young hero."

"Oh, you know we shan't see much of each other. I'm always in the school-room, and I suppose he will be quite a lion, and always out."

"Well, I don't know, Alice; there are so many Crimean heroes going about now, that the novelty has a little worn off, I fancy. At all events, I heard Mrs. Orr object to asking some officer to dinner the other day, because Crimean heroes were so common—a drug in the market, as Mr. Orr describes it."

"Well, if he doesn't go out much, I suppose I shall see very little of him, for I am kept entirely in the school-room, and I suppose he is too old to be sent there —unless I am expected to teach him to read and write, as well as the others. What fun it would be, wouldn't it? But there, poor fellow, I suppose he can't write, for his right arm was shot off, or cut off."

At this moment the clock struck the hour of six, when Alice had to hurry off to Hertford Street.

"Good-bye, dearest Alice!"

"Good-bye, dear old Min!"

They took a tender leave of one another, and parted. Marian was not bound to be back quite so early as Alice, and she wandered about the park, naturally wishing to avoid a return to her bondage.

As she was leaning over the railings by the side of the water, watching some children feeding the aquatic birds, she heard a familiar voice that woke a strange echo in her heart, and made it bound with the recollection of old days—gone, as she fancied, never to return.

She looked round, and saw that two gentlemen had placed themselves on a seat close by. The one was an old gray-headed man, who wore a blue surtout, buttoned up, and a very glossy hat, placed jauntily a little on one side. He had a military look, and appeared to be very deeply engrossed in the conversation in which he was engaged with his companion, a much younger man.

And that younger man was James Trefusis!

Yes! after so long a separation, durir which doubtless neither had forgotten tl other, the two met again—were drifte together by Chance—or shall we give it more solemn name?

For a few moments Marian was quite at loss what to do. Should she speak to him or wait until they came to where she stood? He would no doubt recognise her then. She determined to wait.

Presently the two rose and came towards her. They were very deep in talk, and James was unluckily on the side nearest her. When, therefore, they came up with her, he was looking towards the old man, and would have passed her unnoticed. What should she do? It seemed so unmaidenly to stop him. Could she do so? Would he speak to her after those words of hers, which she felt had caused a sort of estrangement?

There was no time to lose. She must decide on her plan of action that instant, or he would be gone—would disappear in the vast tide of life ebbing and flowing through the great city, and be lost to her for ever.

She stepped forward and laid a hand on his arm!

"James! Mr. Trefusis!"

He stopped, paused in his conversation, and turned towards her inquiringly. There was no great curiosity in the action as he first turned towards her. But the next moment the whole truth flashed on him. He staggered and caught at the railing to support himself.

"Mar—Miss Carlyon! Good God! what does this mean?"

He was looking at her faded cloak—her poor modest little straw bonnet. The change in her appearance filled him with wonder and alarm.

"Did not you know? I thought you had heard. Poor papa is dead, and we were left without a penny."

"Good heavens, this is a dream, surely! Pray sit down here. You appear to be ill. Tell me what this means."

"It means that Alice and I are governesses, Mr. Trefusis."

"You used to call me James in the old days when I was your father's servant, Miss Carlyon. Have I done anything to forfeit your friendship? I shall be proud to serve you in any way still."

"Oh, thank you! You were always so kind to us!"

"I shall be most truly happy if I can do anything to serve you now. You know that, I hope."

"Oh, yes, I do—thank you."

She laid her hand in his. Their eyes met—and then, without a word spoken, I think the old wrong was repaired, forgiven, and forgotten.

END OF VOL. I.

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